

Masculinity and War: Diaries and letters of
soldiers serving in the South African War
(1899-1902)

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Abstract

This thesis is located in the general academic rubric of ‘masculinity’ and war but specifically that sort of masculinity that will be identified by its association with the 'Boer War' known more appropriately as the South African War 1899-1902.

Since the 1980's, masculinity has been the subject of growing academic and intellectual scrutiny. Within this context the relationship between masculinity and war has not been widely interrogated or documented, and certainly examination of the South African War (1899-1902) and masculinity conflation is negligible. Central to the thesis is the critical examination of the narratives of soldiers who fought in South Africa at this time.

The thesis offers a detailed examination of military masculinities as played out in the South African War through critically exploring the soldier's narratives written during the conflict. It locates the analysis within the socio-cultural influences that impacted on the ‘manly’ soldier at the end of the 19th century allowing a 'micro mapping' of masculinity to be revealed in these soldiers' writings.

The letters and diaries of soldiers serving in the South African conflict are analysed through the lens of masculinity; employing a qualitative methodology drawing on thematic narrative analysis utilising a ‘tool kit’ comprising three theoretical constructs of social construction, performativity and emotions. The letters and diaries accessed were written by regular and volunteer soldiers both British and colonial, including officers and the ordinary ‘Tommy’. They reveal a range of masculinity themes that become the empirical focus of the research including: manly imagery, patriotism, bravery, camaraderie and social relations between all ranks, lust for fighting, stoicism and honour/dishonour. The critical interrogation of the soldiers' diaries and letters in this thesis concludes that military masculinities in war are complex, multiple and fluid.

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...but most of all to Pam without whom neither I nor this would be.

This work is dedicated to my lovely mum who I miss and sadly did not see its completion:

Olive Hill (1928 – 2007)

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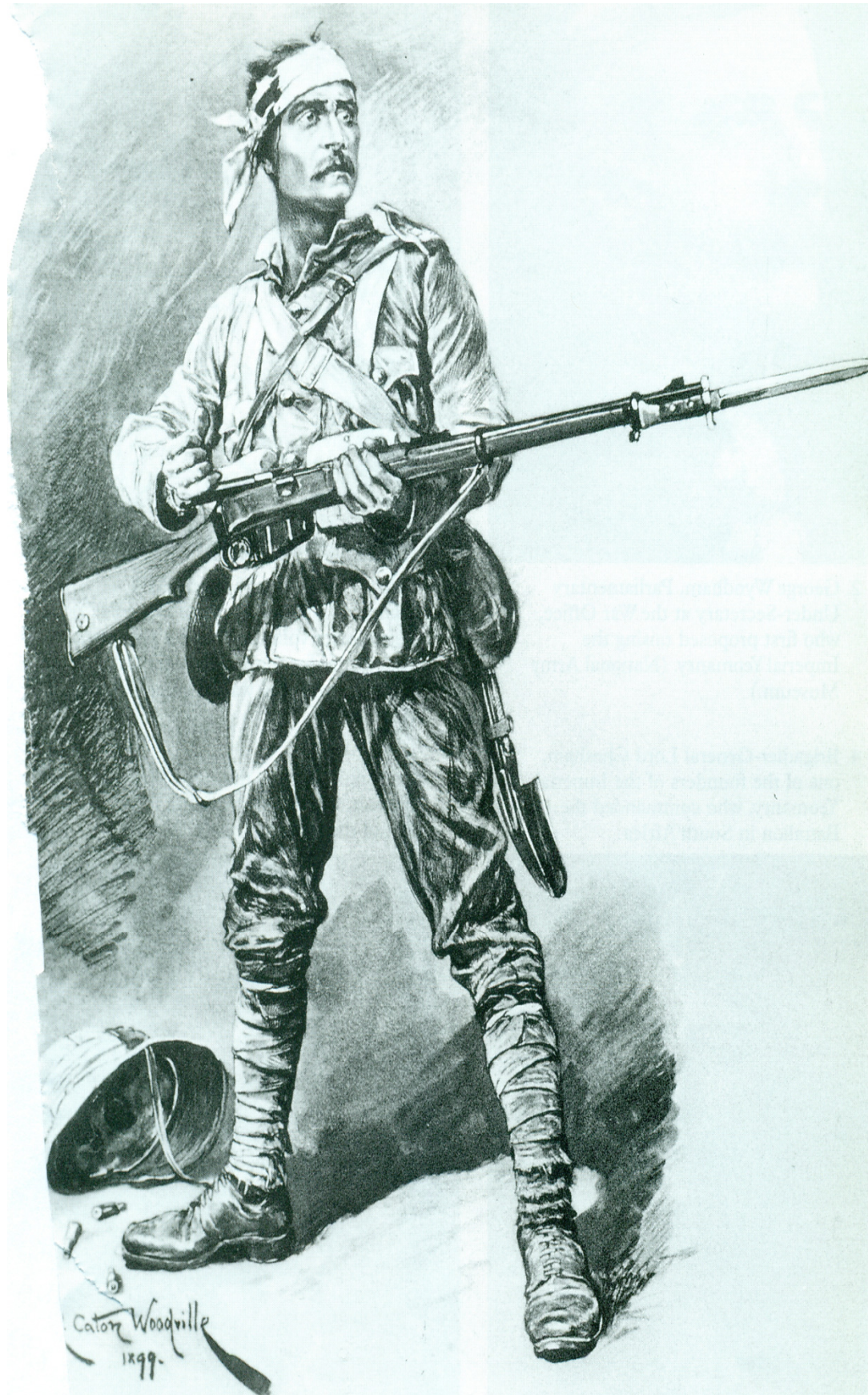
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Abbreviations

AWM	Australian War Memorial (PRO classification)
CLIP	Canadian Letters & Images Project
NAM	National Army Museum
PRONI	Public Records Office Northern Ireland
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SAW	South African War 1899-1902
TWAS	Tyne and Wear Museums Service

Fig i. Kipling's 'Absent Minded Beggar'



Chapter 1

Personal Prelude - Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

Throughout my life I have had a marked fascination with the whole concept of masculinity and war. From growing up and playing soldiers and being brave in playtime 'battles' to my former professional experience as a police officer serving in Northern Ireland in the 1980's during the height of the so called and euphemistically named 'troubles'. I experienced not only the physical reality of fighting a terrorist war with its bloody atrocities coupled with an engagement with the philosophies and *raison d'être* of men in war (Hill 1988). Subsequent training as a sociologist and life experience in general have made me believe that when men wage war not only are women and children damaged, but the soldiers are also damaged by the process. Moreover I have asked myself time and time again, why do men wage war? Are they inherently war like? Did they learn to be war like? Is their masculinity, however presented, integral to war? Finally, and with just as much importance, why did I not see myself as belonging to them even though I considered myself to have fought in a war? The present research is motivated by these personal reflections. It critically explores an intellectual desire to probe and untangle the complex relationship between masculinity and war.

I remember sitting in the front row of a group of new recruits in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). There were about fifty of us alongside various training sergeants, inspectors and other senior ranks. It was 1983 and as far as I was concerned I was now fighting in a war, a war that I had joined to fight against terrorism. I had been determined to fight in this war ever since I was fourteen years old. One morning I had run towards the carnage of the remains of a car bomb which had just exploded in East Belfast. It killed all the occupants and leaving the smouldering charcoaled remains of their torsos in the middle of the

carriageway. This had been, as locals had it, an 'own goal': as the terrorist's bomb had exploded prematurely killing all three of the occupants. I was deeply traumatised by what I had witnessed and ran back to my Aunt's house where I had just come from playing 'mini golf' in her back garden. I ran in to her house in tears and blubbered out some vague description of what I had just witnessed. I spoke of 'car bomb', 'steaming bodies', 'men being sick and crying'. She promptly slapped me across the face and uttered the immortal words, "Big boys don't cry!" So it was then I determined that I was going to be a 'real man' I was going to fight for my country against terrorists and the RUC would be the means to do so. It was only some time later that I reflected not only on my sore face but the fact that my aunt had made this reference to 'big boys' not crying although when I looked back at what I had actually witnessed it was not only the bloody carnage of the aftermath of the car bomb. I realized I had seen 'grown men', not fourteen year old boys, being sick at the scene of human devastation.

As we waited in a room in Enniskillen training centre, or the 'barracks' as it was popularly known the senior Commandant, whom I had met very briefly previously, entered the room. We all dutifully stood to attention and he beckoned us to sit down. There we sat for the next twenty minutes or so while he expounded on the serious nature of our job, how we would be likely to find ourselves in life threatening situations and ultimately face death. Just as importantly, he told us how the war on terrorism would be won by real men fighting for justice and peace. He concluded with a wry smile on his face and asked the question, "Does anyone think the police have too many powers?" (He was referring to the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act which gave the RUC extra policing powers). The room was silent and a lone hand went up, there were audible gasps from both recruits and other police personnel and even more silence followed. The Commandant looked over, "Oh Hill, I might have guessed!" At that he shook his head in despair and walked off. We stood to

attention as he left the room and after we were dismissed there was much whispering and disapproving looks aimed in my direction. It dawned on me that I had just broken ranks and that I was neither conforming nor compliant and I started to feel that I was not the 'real man' the Commandant had just referred to.

Some six months after and very soon after finishing basic training at Enniskillen I found myself stationed in North Belfast in a station nicknamed 'Sleepy Hollow'. One balmy summer's night I was a crew member of an armoured Landrover facing some very heavy rioting and petrol bombing. The armoured Landrover was our only protection, but at one point, we were given the command to leave the vehicle in full riot gear and make arrests. I had just opened the rear doors of the vehicle and was stepping down on to the road when in my periphery vision I saw a petrol bomber throw a petrol bomb (or Molotov cocktail) at me. By some miracle the milk bottle full of flaming petrol extinguished itself just as it simultaneously hit me and the back door of the Landrover. The stench of petrol was overwhelming and what I recall most was one of the other police officers screaming at me, "For fucks sake Ivan get back in the fucking vehicle". At that I was hauled back into the Landrover and we sped off to find somewhere we could safely stop and see how I was. I was soaked through with petrol and my eyes were beginning to sting. Even my revolver was sticky with petrol. My colleagues then started to see the funny side of this and proceeded to ask me if I wanted a cigarette. They started to put cigarettes in their mouths and ask each other if they had a lighter or matches. One of them produced a lighter and held it towards everyone as if to light their cigarettes. As if to acknowledge my predicament he ventured, "If you can't take a joke Ivan, you shouldn't have joined!" and as if to make me feel better he added, "Don't worry son I would have shot the fucker if he tried again, you know what they say, 'better tried by twelve than carried by six'". I just smiled because, in that moment between smelling the petrol and fearing for my life I knew that if I showed any emotional

reaction other than the ‘right’ one - the tough manly one - I would have been ridiculed. Much laughter ensued and eventually I was returned safely to ‘Sleepy Hollow’ where I managed to shower and change clothing. Still in near shock I started to think back not only on what had just happened but also on the car bomb incident of my early teenage years, and I started to ask myself, what is this state of being ‘manly’ really all about? Why did I feel so compelled to act as I did? Why did my comrades in arms feel they too had to put a face on the situation? And why was this prevailing sense of manhood/manliness/masculinity so very strong to the extent that it seemed all pervasive?

Some decades later I was given the opportunity to explore masculinity and a war of another century. Professor Liz Stanley then at Newcastle University had created a studentship around the South African War (1899-1902), masculinity and soldiers’ diaries and letters and this was developed into an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded scholarship which I was successful in winning. There were so many questions I wanted to ask of the research. I felt I too had fought in a war, but not of the type I planned to investigate. So I found myself face to face with an exciting challenge. At the outset of this research, soldiers who fought in the South African War (1899-1902)¹ seemed distant figures from a distant conflict; but as my work progressed and my understanding grew, I began to feel less estranged and more and more connected.

1.2 One of ‘Victoria’s *little wars*’: contextualising the thesis

On October 9th 1899 the two South African Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State delivered an ultimatum² to Her Majesty Queen Victoria’s Government

¹ From now on the South African war will be referred to as the SAW.

² This ultimatum was the culmination of a series of events in relations between the Transvaal and Britain that were arguably contrived by the British in the person of Alfred Milner to force a war situation to develop. The ultimatum was issued on October 9th 1899 and among other requirements were that British troops be withdrawn from the Transvaal borders, that all reinforcement troops who had arrived after the 1st July 1899 be removed and any currently en route not be landed in South Africa and that failure to do so within forty eight hours would be considered a formal declaration of war (Fremont-Barnes 2003).

stating that failure to comply with the detail of the ultimatum not later than 5p.m. on October 11th 1899 would lead to a formal declaration of war³ Pakenham (2004). On October 11th 1899 war was formally declared and so began a war that has been described as, the biggest ever ‘small war’ of late Victorian ‘New Imperialism’(Nasson 1999:xi). Many of the soldiers who fought in the war were to commit their thoughts and reflections to diaries and letters. This thesis looks at their war writings through the prism of masculinity. Here I mean I will examine the soldiers’ diaries and letters, their narratives, by considering how they express their masculinity. Masculinity will therefore be the central plank, the lens through which the narratives will be examined.

The South African War (SAW) witnessed many new challenges as to how wars were fought for both combatants and non combatants (Pakenham 2004). The SAW⁴ as it became known was also referred to as, ‘the last of the gentleman’s wars’ and a ‘white man’s war’ (Nasson1999). The former was primarily because it was framed at the time when following gentlemanly rules of combat where fairness and a sense of civilised warfare prevailed and the latter emanated from a false understanding that the SAW only involved white only combatants which it patently did not (Fremont-Barnes 2003). At its height there were some 450,000 Empire troops⁵ fighting against approximately 40,000 Boer Commando⁶. It was also a conflict made notorious for the British by their use of ‘methods of barbarism’ (Spies 1977). This referred to the introduction of concentration camps to intern Boer civilians (mostly women and children) combined with the use of the infamous ‘scorched earth’ policy which lay waste to much of the South African countryside (Spies 1977). This thesis takes as its

³ See ‘The Origins of the Anglo-Boer War’ by S.B. Spies (1972).

⁴ More popularly known as the ‘Boer War’ as the British were fighting the Dutch South African settlers known as Boers. The expression South African War is more widely accepted as it does not preclude the role of black South Africans as the Boer War might suggest. There were other variations of naming of the war for example The Anglo Boer War but for the purposes of this research it will be referred to as the South African War (SAW). For a good brief overview of the origins of the SAW see S.B. Spies, ‘The Origins of the Anglo-Boer War’ (1972).

⁵ These troops of Empire hailed mostly from Australia and Canada with some fewer from New Zealand.

⁶ The Commando was the organisational fighting unit of the Boers.

focus the role of masculinity in war as portrayed in the lives and writings of the soldiers who fought in South Africa. I will demonstrate that not only is masculinity and war a complex and fluid relationship, but that in the context of the SAW the interplay of the prevailing Victorian manly values and expectations had a significant impact on the way it was played out throughout the conflict. This will be used to situate and organise the data and finally the overall aims of the research will be articulated.

1.3 Thesis summary:

Masculinity and war have had a long acquaintance (Braudy 2003) but as Higate (2003) has said, the scholarly activity examining this connection is not quite so substantial. Both Morgan (1994) and Klein (2000) argue that it is not only in war that men attempt to express and prove their masculinity and manhood, but they do acknowledge that war acts as a rite of passage in which violence, aggression and self sacrifice are essential vectors for the proclamation of masculinity. In war the domination of men by other men can be interpreted as a product of forces of socialisation that create dominant and subordinate masculinities. This results in certain masculine behaviours being valorised as manly and desirable and seen as the tangible products of being ‘real men’ (Barrett 2001). How they ‘performed’ as men (Butler 1990) and how they emotionally responded to this performance is also critical (Scheff 2006). I will show that as the SAW progressed the soldiers’ narratives of their manliness/masculinity⁷ reveal shifting attitudes to the war moving from the image of patriotic bravery, to cherishing being with soldier mates and desiring of killing right through to how honourably he conducted himself and how he maintained his manly resolve.

This thesis will demonstrate that masculinity in the SAW was fluid and complex and was to some degree contingent on the situations soldiers found themselves in from leaving

⁷ I will use manliness and masculinity interchangeably throughout the thesis but in the context that, ‘*Manliness*’ was the most clearly articulated indicator of mens gender in the nineteenth century’ (Tosh 2005:2) and that masculinity describes a diverse range masculinities inclusive of manliness.

home to the battle front; and from being with mates to killing Boers. Soldiers' behaviour in terms of masculinity appears to show that, as they became more socialised into fighting, their attitudes to manly behaviour changed. The transformation from raw recruit arriving in South Africa to engaging in the reality of battle with the Boers saw a change in many soldiers' attitudes. The shift from the initial pre-battle bravado and surges of martial patriotism with its calls to fight and kill and make the ultimate sacrifice, to the first-hand scenes of horror and carnage during the war was for some a very telling and emotional experience that called for detailed expression in soldiers' writings.

The more brutalised dimensions of the war particularly around 'scorched earth' demonstrate where narratives became much more strident in terms of attitudes and camaraderie between soldier mates. Actions, particularly with regard to the farm burnings which were a hallmark of the 'scorched earth' policy, were seen to some no more than a result of men routinely only following orders, while it left others conflicted. The dying embers of 'scorched earth' in the final playing out of the war brought with it yet another set of contradictory presentations of the manly soldier self.

This thesis provides an in depth analysis of the life writings of soldiers fighting in the SAW. The masculinity/manliness of these soldiers narratives show that it would be overly simplistic to think of their behaviour, actions and reflections as merely the passive responses of following orders. I suggest that men who fight wars often mirror the dominant socio-cultural, military and social environments into which they are socialised. They can also resist and refute those environments. The fluidity of masculinity/manliness as illustrated in the soldiers diaries is testament to the complexity and nebulousness of masculinity and war, specifically in this study of the South African War (1899-1902).

1.4 Genesis and development:

The origins and driving force of this thesis lie in the relationship between masculinity and the SAW. In terms of literature directly addressing masculinity and the SAW little is available. Literature directly addressing this theme is scarce. A recent special edition of the *International Journal of the History of Sport* by Mangan and Mckenzie (2008) has done much to highlight the role of Victorian masculinity in the SAW, primarily in the context of sport. By the same token it also highlights how much has *not* been addressed and that is where this thesis will substantially contribute to debates in the field relating to masculinity and the SAW.

The initial literature search identified a relatively small body of research on the theme of masculinity and war which this thesis has been fortunate to draw upon. Although Goldstein (2006:1) states that, ‘...no comprehensive account has yet emerged on the role of gender and war – a topic that includes both men and women but ultimately revolves around men somewhat more than women’. Investigation into masculinity and the SAW appeared to have been masked in a cloak of invisibility, with little or no accessible yet substantive literature. Some commentators have suggested that despite the constancy of the link between war, militarism and masculinity, scholarly activity has overlooked the last element. Higate (2003: xi) has commented on ‘...the relative paucity of both empirical and theoretical material linking the military with masculinity represented an ongoing concern’.

Two very noticeable things stood out when I was initially examining the existing research writings on the SAW. First there was a relatively rich account of the SAW in terms of its military history: Farwell (1999); Nason (1999); Carver (2000); Jackson (2001) and Pakenham (2004). Secondly although many writers used the diaries and letters of soldiers who fought in the SAW in a variety of ways very few⁸ if any were making the link between

⁸ A major exception is Mangan and Mckenzie (2008) as previously mentioned.

masculinity and war using the medium of life writings. For Plummer (2005) these life writings are the ‘documents of life’ and for my research this means the soldier’s diaries and letters. It is, therefore, the case that, as far as the SAW is concerned, much had been written about it, but little if anything has addressed my key research focus of masculinity and war told by the men who fought.

The positioning of the SAW at the *fin de siècle* of the nineteenth century provides for a unique juncture in British military history (Porter 2006). This was the point of convergence of the nineteenth and twentieth century’s and a time of great social, industrial and technological change. Not only was the industrial revolution in full flow but the very nature of work itself was changing (Tebbit 2006:1136, 1149)⁹. British imperialism was in the ascendancy, promulgated by an ideology regarding men, manliness and masculinity in late Victorian society. This ideology positioned men as not only bread winners at home but at the vanguard of all things British including notions of how men should behave and express themselves and their masculinity. Manliness became the expression of this masculinity with its contours shaping the performance of ‘real’ men, for example in being strong emotionally, stoic, brave in action and deed and adhering to a pre determined manly script which was also governed by concepts of racial and gender superiority. Masculinity and its Victorian manifestation manliness appeared to be in a state of flux with the old guard imperialist masculinity (male authority, men in power) confronted with the new challenges and increasingly gendered dynamics of a new age (repositioning of women in society, challenge to male power), Krebs (2004), Tosh (2005). For example from the early part of the nineteenth century it had been only men that been socially positioned to properly engage in politics as only they, ‘were endowed with the necessary potentialities of reason’ (McClelland 2000:115). At the *fin de siècle* the position of women was beginning to change, women were

⁹ The changing nature of work and the inclusion of more women in the workforce led some to suggest that the feminization of some trades/professions like clerks led to an increase in recruitment to the army for the SAW. See Richard Price (1972) for a good full account of recruitment in the SAW.

now taking a more prominent role in society arguably evidenced by all female Ladies Commission and Fawcett Commission both of which investigated the concentration camps of the SAW (Krebs 2004:69-79). Although gender equality was still many decades away from this period manliness had to respond to the challenge of the emergent 'New Woman' (Marsh 2001). It was a period when the concept of manliness itself as a marker of masculinity was increasingly in flux (Tosh 2005), however one of the ways it could retain its primacy was through performance in war. The SAW offered the opportunity to re-establish the strength and vigour of the heroic warrior as a signifier of Victorian manliness, an image that was promoted and lauded through popular culture.

The late Victorian era also produced ever-increasing levels of adult literacy. As a result many more soldiers were able to read and write than was the case in previous campaigns (Jackson 2001:80, 81). This helped to produce the volume of diaries and letters from which this thesis draws extensively. This was also the era of increased public access to popular media (Jackson 2001) such as the popular press, penny dreadfuls¹⁰, books, poetry and the music hall. All of which appeared to conspire in defining Victorian masculinity and manliness, showing how it was to be a 'real' man and act in proper 'manly' ways. The military were not immune to such portrayals and, if anything, embraced contemporary romanticised ideals of manly behaviour (Pakenham 2004). It is among the SAW diaries and letters that embodiments of these sentiments - among many others - are located. This research offers unique insight into the soldiers' world of masculinity in war. It is to be hoped that it may go some way to realise Heathorn's suggestion that much more scholarly activity into masculinity in the late Victorian/early Edwardian era be addressed by, '...work that relates masculinity as it was imagined with what was enacted...' (2004:4). The use of soldiers' diaries and letters makes concrete his suggestion.

¹⁰ Penny dreadfuls were the cheap 'comic books' of their time.

As my research further developed and the diaries and letters were examined more fully, themes of masculinity and war emerged from the soldiers' writings. I now present these themes as they will be appearing in the data chapters. In the first of these Chapter Five they are as follows: *Manly Imagery*, *Patriotism*, and *Bravery*; in Chapter Six they are *Camaraderie*, *Relationships between 'Tommys' and officers*, and *Lust for fighting*; and in the final data chapter Seven they are, *Stoicism* and *Honour and dishonour*.

1.5 Research Aims and Methods:

This thesis endeavours to create a heuristic theoretical framework for those seeking to better understand the complexities of masculinity and war. I will examine masculinity in its own right and then explore the relationship between it and war. By initially examining masculinity I seek to understand the complexity of this term in all its manifestations especially as it was perceived and enacted in the late Victorian era. The relationship between masculinity and war is made explicit through the analysis of the soldiers' diaries and letters.

The methods adopted for the research are qualitative and based on archival research measures and narrative analysis. The use of diaries and letters as narratives in social research is well documented (Stanley 1992; Chamberlayne et al. 2000; Roberts 2002; Prior 2003 Plummer 2005) and dealt with in depth in Chapter Three. For this work I take narrative analysis to be the means by which texts, in this case diaries and letters, can be analysed using a thematic device which allows textual material to be classified into themes for further scrutiny. This is the central hub from which the research for this thesis is developed and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three. This work seeks to redress the relatively neglected academic investigation of masculinity in the SAW. The use of the diaries and letters offers the opportunity to extract extraordinarily rich qualitative data, but as yet this has not been achieved within the context of the SAW. Part of the qualitative method utilised was extensive archival research particularly at the National Army Museum (NAM), Public

Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI), County Durham Archives,[all in person] Australian War Memorial (AWM) [by correspondence] and the Canadian Letters and Images Project¹¹ (CLIP) [through web access]. I have also made use of published volumes of diaries and letters and newspapers. As a research process, this type of archival retrieval is not without its challenges: these will be referred to in much more depth later in the thesis in Chapter Three.

1.6 Thesis Structure

'The Battle Plans'

The chapters of the thesis are presented in a conventional PhD format where following the introductory chapter the main body of the thesis progresses, beginning with Chapter Two *'Theoretical Considerations'*. This chapter will encompass key discussions around masculinity including definitions and historical antecedents with particular emphasis on the use of the term 'masculinities' (Braudy 2003, Tosh 2005). Hegemonic masculinity Connell (1995) and the social construction of masculinity, Butler (1990) combined with Scheff's (2006) sociology of emotion will be used to help decipher masculinity per se. The dynamics of Victorian masculinity including imperialism are also considered as they play an important part in the discussion around masculinity and the SAW.

Chapter Three will detail the methodological and theoretical approaches used for the research. This chapter opens with how I position myself as a reflexive researcher within the context of the research (Higate and Cameron 2006). This I will argue is an important facet of the overall research process. How the material was gathered and collated will be discussed with a justification of the methods employed along with any methodological problems encountered (Prior 2003). Particular reference will be given to justifying the use of

¹¹ <http://www.canadianletters.ca/>.

biographical methods that utilise documents of life (Plummer 2005). The role of memory and post/memory in the research process and analysis will also be addressed (Duvenage 1999).

Chapter 4 will historicise and detail the SAW including making links back to Chapter Two around Victorian masculinity (Tosh 2005). The structure of the Victorian army as engaged in the SAW will be reviewed and will include a consideration of the role and social position of the army in Victorian society detailing for example rank structure, recruitment particularly around issues of volunteers (Price 1972; Bennett 1999; Spiers 1999; Pakenham 2004). The socio-cultural influences at play around imperial masculinity will be explored including the literature and media of the time, popular culture and other socio-cultural medium (Boyd and McWilliam 2007). The origins of the SAW and the public perceptions of the war will be examined; for example considering how the SAW was perceived of as a ‘white man’s war’ and the ‘last of the gentleman’s wars’ (Pakenham 2004). The former refers to the general perception that only the white British and white Boers took part in the SAW which manifestly was not the case (Pakenham 2004), and the latter makes reference to the opinion that the SAW was somehow fought following gentlemanly rules of engagement and conduct where playing fair was paramount. The structure of the SAW and how it was prosecuted including its chronological war stages and the composition of combatants/non combatants on both British and Boer sides and the position of the indigenous peoples will also be discussed (Nasson 1999).

Chapter Five – ‘*Arms and the Man(ly)*’ - will be the start of the three substantive empirical chapters and will begin with particular emphasis on what I consider to be the ideological context of the war, developing the themes of *Manly Imagery*, *Patriotism*, and *Bravery*. Research findings are then presented with particular emphasis on these themes of masculinity and war. Each in turn will be scrutinised and findings presented. This chapter will demonstrate that throughout the SAW the masculinity drawn from the soldiers’ writings

depicts how there is a contradiction between the manly 'idealised' Victorian soldier (Powell 1994) and how the soldiers actually perceived their soldiering reality.

Chapter Six – *'Men at close quarters: chums, mates, brother officers and killing Boers'* – using the themes of *Camaraderie, Relationships between 'Tommys' and officers,* and *Lust for fighting* this chapter will essentially focus on the social context of the war and the key interactions that play out between soldiers of all ranks in terms of their masculinity. The research findings from this chapter will be highlighted and these will show a distinctive shift in the dynamics of masculinity and SAW. Here for example the schism between the officers and other ranks becomes discernibly more exaggerated and there also a very perceptible and increased criticism of the rank and file soldier with his colleagues who were 'falling short' of manly behaviour. Soldiers' lust for fighting is also prominently featured in this chapter where both 'Tommy'¹² and his officers engage at times in a carnival of bloody carnage and killing Boers.

Chapter Seven – *'Stiff upper lip!: the honourable and dishonourable soldier'*- taking the themes of *Stoicism and Honour/dishonour* the chapter develops the emotional context of the soldiers' masculinity. It is here for example in the more 'barbaric' expression of the SAW that the soldier finds himself fighting in a war that challenges not only his idea of proper civilised behaviour both to combatant and non combatant but also his ideas of manliness. Also in evidence are how the soldiers position themselves in terms of women, particularly, but not exclusively, Boer women and also other men. The contradiction of manly imperial soldiering and the challenge to it and the challenge to the Victorian image of imperial superiority are also evident (McCracken 2000).

The conclusions from the research are drawn together in Chapter Eight. This will be accomplished through a reflective overview of the research, the thesis chapters, methods of

¹² 'Tommy' or 'Tommys' was the popular colloquialism for the rank of Private in the British army. Also known as 'Thomas Atkins'.

enquiry used and key research findings. Commentary around the heuristic value of the thesis and possible future research will draw the thesis to its conclusion.

Fig ii. Private Henry Garside - Letters from Home



Chapter 2

Theoretical Considerations – Literature Analysis and Research Issues

‘...war has been accepted as the great touchstone of manliness since time immemorial’

(Oldfield 1989:237)

2.1 Introduction

As the quote above infers, the idea that manliness and war are interlinked has formed an intrinsic part of the social fabric of British and Western Society. In this theory chapter I will address those key theoretical underpinnings of masculinity in general and military masculinity in particular, the aim being to lay the foundation for an effective analytical framework that enables the relationship between masculinity and the SAW to be scrutinised. To begin I propose to trace how the theory, discourse and defining of masculinity has developed over time. The historical positioning of masculinity is essential to the overall coherence of the concept within the SAW. I argue – as Haywood and Mac an Ghail suggest – that ‘no attempts to analyse masculinity can ignore the way masculinity is defined in history’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003:11). I also agree with the position of White (1997:20) that:

Different styles of masculinity are developed historically, not given for all times and places. Those now dominant are therefore integrally interwoven with ‘development’ – through colonialism, the movement towards modernity and now globalism.

It is important to recognise that the transformation and positioning of masculinity in history reflect the change in gender relations that created a super ordinate masculinity embedded in heterosexuality and distinct from a perceived subordinate homosexuality and femininity. The work of Davidoff and Hall (1987) distinguished how a heterosexual ‘Christian’ oriented masculinity that valued military prowess and positioned men as ‘superior’ to women and

other men became embedded in nineteenth century perceptions of manliness. This theme was developed by Roper and Tosh (1991) further detailing the supremacy of heterosexual male power in the nineteenth century and the subjugation of the feminine. Connell in his seminal work on hegemonic masculinity (1995, 1998) exposed how heterosexual, white, middle class men attain social privilege and power subordinating both the feminine and all other masculinities. These studies exemplify how masculinity has been historically positioned and also how traditional views of gender needed to be analysed from a radical perspective, one that challenged the traditional perceived wisdom that biology determined gender roles. In the early twentieth century, masculinity was linked to sex role theory, in which men and women were located in ascribed or accepted pre-determined roles. 'Accepted roles' seems an appropriate term here, insofar as challenges to this ideology were not enough to alter the fact that, in the main, these roles were taken as given and natural. Despite the fact that women in World War One took on many of these ascribed 'masculine roles', this ideology/theory remained predominant and embedded in the social world. Thus, men were continued to be identified as providers and women as nurturers: this was perceived to be the natural way in which the mutually dependent roles of both sexes were divided (Gardiner 2002).

This interpretation of masculinity and how it is played out in manly behaviours is key to this thesis. The sociological interpretation of masculinity will be explored from its historical antecedents to current research and theory. In considering a theoretical framework within which to critically analyse soldiers' masculinity in the period of the SAW I constructed a 'tool kit' encompassing a consideration of three major theoretical concepts, namely hegemonic masculinity, performativity, and the sociology of emotion specifically dramaturgical analysis. It is my contention that each of these three elements on its own provides an incomplete and fractured picture of masculinity but that when they are combined and allowed to overlap each other, they offer a potent theoretical mechanism with which to

critically analyse SAW soldiers' masculinity. The military masculinity and war nexus of the SAW will be examined from a social constructionist perspective. For the purpose of this work, the terms 'manliness' and 'masculinity' are interchangeable.

2.2 Theoretical Background

The term masculinity has many interpretations and definitions; I contend that by its very nature it is a fluid concept (Segal 1993) and as such subject to shifts regarding time, place and situation. The reification of masculinity not only requires an historical underpinning but must encompass a much broader consideration of the literature (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003; Mangan and Walvin 1987). Masculinity as a fluid concept has been framed by theorists as dependent upon ideology (Hearn 1987; Brittan 1989), culture (Connell 2002), and geography (Woodward 2000; Campbell et al. 2006). I am suggesting that masculinity as a concept is diverse and can be interpreted in differing ways dependent on what particular analytical lens is applied to it. There is further complexity in interpretation when ideology, culture and geography are coupled with the historical context. For the purposes of this research, these are all further contextualized in the prosecution of war itself, using the written records left by soldiers in the diaries and letters they produced in the SAW.

Historically the theoretical analysis of gender was predicated on biological determinism, 'Biological determinism (in respect to gender) is the view that the properties of gender are caused by, or determined by, the properties of sex' (Fehr 2004:140). This essentialist perspective located men and women in terms of their biology and assigned sex roles accordingly. These sex roles featuring mothers as those who nourish or fathers as breadwinners were a 'cultural elaboration of biological differences' (Connell 1995:68-71). Boyd and McWilliam (2007) contend that such essentialist notions of gender assignment were particularly embedded in the Victorian era. If so then the strength of this 'cultural elaboration' was powerful enough to override the reality of many women's lives, working for

long hours in the factories of the industrial revolution. The result being that the ethos of the strong manly man was reinforced by the social milieu and as I will demonstrate in my later findings resonates with soldiers self perceptions and presentation of their masculinity. Post modern academic analysis and commentary now recognise and take into consideration these gender role complexities and have since made redundant the metanarrative surrounding sex role theory having exposed it as flawed (Connell 1993:599) but in the context of this work it is necessary to consider its influence in order to locate masculinity within the historical context of the SAW.

Masculinity as a concept does not exist in a vacuum. A range of definitions of masculinity and manliness have been posited throughout the development of its discourses. This means that the use of such terms needs to be elaborated in order to bring clarity to understanding this work. Theorists have engaged in a range of studies trying to determine what the term 'masculinity' means assigning it to behaviours, emotions, belief systems and ways of conceptualising the social world, using each of these influences to define their version of masculinity (Connell 1995). In response to these many theories (Brod 1987; Hearn 1998, 2004; Connell 2002; Kimmel et al. 2005) now take the view that it is more appropriate to talk about the pluralized term 'masculinities', acknowledging the diverse range and fluidity of masculinity rather than a universal heteronormativity¹³ (Jones 2006). Therefore, for this thesis talking of masculinities in the plural allows a more effective analysis to be made of SAW soldiers behaviours, multiple subject positions, through their writings in their letters and diaries hence avoiding a 'crude biological reductionism' (Jewkes 2005:48).

Beynon (2002:55) also supports the concept of a 'diverse and fragmented' masculinity, but goes on to highlight the importance of locating the analysis within socio-historical and social influences. There are challenges to studying masculinity in any context

¹³ Heteronormativity has been defined as 'a required part of manliness' Connell (1995:196) or as, 'culturally hegemonic heterosexuality', Jones (2006:451).

and Segal (1993:638) suggests that ‘We need to pay attention to the variety of masculinities that jostle uneasily within our culture’ and considers this to indicate that masculinity as such is multi-dimensional. For Whitehead (2002:5), the inherent complexities of studying masculinity within a sociological framework are bound up with ‘trying to understand... the illusory character of masculinities, the material consequences of men’s practices and the influence of the culture/environment.’ This is echoed by Dalley-Trim (2007: 200), who suggests that masculinity is neither innate nor uniform, but is instead part of a complex discourse in which no overarching universal masculinity exists. In reality, there are a range of masculinities. For others, the dynamic of masculinity suggests that it is ‘both temporally and geographically contingent’ (Berg and Longhurst 2003:352) where for example the manliness as determined in one generation – chivalry, becomes redundant for another or the manliness of indigenous peoples – wearing body adornment is ridiculed by a usually white colonial class. Giving these theoretical comments it would suggest that men have a variety of expressions of masculinity. For some the physical presentation of the male body is the key sign of masculinity as body builders might suggest (Reeser 2010:11) and for others being perceived of as brave or dependable might have greater purchase. From boyhood onwards men are encouraged to be tough, not display their emotions and to perform masculinity (Messerschmidt 1993, 2004, Scheff 2006:3). The relevance of this will be revealed when the nexus of masculinity and war is considered in some more detail later in the chapter.

The study of masculinity is arguably complex and socio-historical overview of masculinity must be tempered by the recognition of such complexities (Hearn 1998). Something that is acknowledged within this work as examination of the data chapters reveals. The masculinity of the Victorian era manifested itself in dimensions of a manliness which among other things valorised bravery, stoicism and chivalry underpinned by an ethos of Christian morality (Dawson 2005). During this period, the designation of manliness was a

powerful social statement imbued with structural economic and gender power (this will be considered in depth later in Chapter Four). The interpretation of masculinity as manliness allows for an analysis of men's behaviour within the SAW by interrogating soldiers' narratives. Here, their own social statements of manliness are exposed for analysis through an examination of the social construction of masculinities, the 'behaviour, practices and conversations deemed culturally appropriate for men.' (Barlett 2004:207).

2.3.1 Social Construction of Masculinities:

How do men become men? What sort of men do they become? Does it happen simply by dint of nature, when a natural selection process takes place, allowing a man to become a 'real man' through successful acceptance into the 'men's club' (Bird 1996). This idea echoes the 'social closure' that comes from men being accepted into the club they aspire to join either by a rite of passage or by learning the language of the club (Weber 1964). Alternatively, it can take place through cultural assimilation resulting in men holding economic and political power and thereby benefit from these social by products of masculinity (Brittan 1989:84). By this I mean that masculinity can be so integral to the social and economic fabric that men in their everyday lives hold the reins of social, economic and political power. Furthermore as Goffman (1966, 1990) suggests the structure and agency dimensions of being a man centre on the need to perform in a manly way, thereby embracing what Goffman called the 'cult of masculinity' (2005). This 'cult of masculinity' is a pervasive structuring of mens behaviour that implicitly and explicitly assumes the dominance and superiority of a hegemonic masculinity (Connell1995).

In this section, I will consider the importance of the social construction of masculinity and will argue that hegemonic masculinity is an important element of the social constructionist discourse. Introducing the concept of the social construction of masculinity not only challenges essentialist arguments concerning gender difference, but allows for a

wider consideration of the power base that men inherit, primarily in relation to women and secondarily to other men. The central tenet of the social constructionist analysis of masculinity and gender relations is total rejection of the essentialist argument previously referred to in the chapter (Brickell 2006). A social construction is any institutionalised entity or artefact in a system of human interaction which is invented or constructed by people who agree to behave as if it exists (Whitehead 2002). Gender divisions such as masculinity and femininity are such constructs, since they do not exist as a fixed pre-determined reality, but have been socially constructed. Those who support the 'natural' order of gender division subscribe to the essentialist position based on biological assignment of sex identity (Pease 2000). Taking a social constructionist¹⁴ analysis of masculinity creates an opportunity for wider examination of some of the key dynamics of masculinity as a socially created phenomenon. If as Messner (1990:419) suggests the concepts of masculinity are less fixed and more fluid it is this fluidity that the research will explore. By this I mean those aspects of the social construction of masculinity that locate themselves in how a superior (hegemonic) masculinity is created and maintained and how the maintenance of this hegemony is achieved.

At its crudest level, the social construction of masculinity suggests that to be masculine/manly is really to be not feminine; it also means that a man may denigrate the feminine. It is, of course, much more than that and is concerned with the analysis of gender relations and of the ways in which men and women reproduce existing power relationships. Not only are masculinity and femininity related to one another as social constructs, but 'definitions of masculinity are historically reactive to changing definitions of femininity' (Kimmel et al 2005:126). Masculinity therefore can be viewed as an entity in continual flux (Carver 2006).

¹⁴ This is not meant as a definitive analysis of social constructionist theory but rather given as working overview. For a detailed consideration of the nuances of the social constructionist debate see Brickell (2006).

It can also be argued that, although masculinity is a product of social construction – in other words, it has no definitive or objective natural genesis – society to one degree or another buys into the idea of the gender divide as a natural phenomenon (Bowker 1998:16). Men appear to conform to socially learnt and culturally exalted forms of masculinity. That is not to say that all men conform to this expectation of masculinity, but that sufficient numbers do so and thereby create the social, political, cultural and economic conditions that regulate power relations in their favour. Even those men who do not explicitly engage in such activities can, through their acquiescence, become beneficiaries of a ‘patriarchal dividend’ of the gendered social system (Connell 1987: xiii). This can be illustrated at its crudest level in the gender segregation of work where men are beneficiaries of a system which favours men over women in terms of higher pay and conditions and where men do not challenge or set out to correct such anomalies (Bradley et al 2000). Although it appears to be important for men to adhere to the culturally defined expectations around masculine behaviour (Kaplan 2007), such expectations can change across race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, life stages and historical eras (Levant and Kopecky 1996, Coles 2007:30).

Being masculine and manly can be promoted as something for males to strive for and achieve, a prized goal in a man’s life (Edley and Wetherell 1995) and it was particularly so for the Victorian soldier of the SAW (Dawson 2005:148). Messner (1990:438) argues that a ‘gendering process’ starts in boys from the time of early socialisation and developmental processes particularly by family and school influences continuing throughout the course of their lives. This theme is picked up by Spector-Mersel (2006), who contends the whole life course trajectory of masculinity makes a significant contribution to the social construction of masculinity and argues that the parameters of masculinity and the ways in which men act it out change over the course of any single life. How life trajectory can alter the presentation of masculinity is also examined by Evans and Wallace (2008) in their study of prisoners’ lives

as described through life narratives. Such narratives identify where key turning points in these men's lives altered the masculine persona in important ways.

What it is to be a man and the rules of being masculine have a resonance for many men from very early in their lives. Such rules often relate to how to behave in front of others by being brave, enduring hardship without complaining, being tough and certainly not in any way appearing effeminate. On a personal note, in the course of my life I have at times been called a 'hard man', 'a fop', 'tough', 'manly', and a 'man's man'. At other times I have been told 'big boys don't cry', 'don't be a wimp', and particularly after colleagues had been murdered during my service with the RUC, 'if you can't take a joke you shouldn't have joined'. Such statements are a reinforcement of masculine ideals of where I *should* have been, either as a man or a boy growing up. Such reflections provide an introduction to the critical presentation of hegemonic masculinity.¹⁵ Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) presents its form of masculinity as the desired apotheosis of masculinity. How hegemonic masculinity is performed in a reinforcing repetitive way of behaving (Butler 1990) and the emotional impact that has on men is the core focus of the following section. Hegemonic masculinity, performativity and emotional responses of men are jointly considered as a means to better understanding masculinity and manliness.

2.3.2 Making sense of Masculinity and Manliness: creating an analytical 'tool kit' for analysis

There is little doubt that the theoretical constructs that address concepts of masculinity are complex. I contend by using hegemonic masculinity as a central pivot for discussion, it is possible to understand better how some men can dominate not only women but other men. The central issue here is how power, that is the capacity for one person to dominate, control and manipulate another, is used and abused in such relationships. However, as masculinity

¹⁵ I will consider my personal position in relation to masculinity and this research in Chapter Three.

continues to be defined and redefined, theoretical concepts like hegemonic maleness are themselves subject to change. This is in keeping with the fluid nature of masculinity itself. I argue that the study of masculinity needs conceptual tools fit for purpose: the theoretical consideration of the social construction of masculinity can be enhanced by triangulating and layering our approaches, namely hegemonic masculinity, performativity and dramaturgical analysis. This way of doing things, I argue, creates an analytical framework or 'tool kit' that can be successfully used for an enhanced critical analysis of the soldiers' writings. I further argue that the hegemony of masculinity sets the boundaries of soldiery manliness, and that this is then repetitively reinforced as core element, after which it is mediated through the dramaturgical presentation of the self. I would further contend that the sociology of emotion is the glue that holds the three theoretical positions together to provide a much stronger theoretical framework with which to examine critically the minutiae of the everyday lives and masculinity of the soldiers of the SAW. The following will now detail the individual elements of the tool kit, that is, hegemonic masculinity, performativity and dramaturgical analysis.

2.3.3 Hegemonic masculinity:

The concept of patriarchy pre-dates the more modern term hegemony, but it remains of some importance in its own right, particularly in the Victorian era and therefore deserves some consideration. With that behind us, I shall examine hegemonic forms of masculinity as expressed through class, gender, race and homosocial bonding. These particular forms are not only of central importance to hegemonic masculinity, but have a major resonance with the Victorian concept of masculinity; they feature substantially in the diaries and letters of the SAW.

In the analysis of gender power, I find that patriarchy as a concept takes a reductionist position that to a large degree ignores the subtleties, nuances and complexity of

hegemonic masculinity. The role of patriarchy in understanding masculinities can be most usefully employed when it is treated as an historical reference point, particularly when contemplating the nineteenth century. In this century, it is arguable that gender power dynamics were more distinctly apparent in the following dichotomy: Male: superior. Female: inferior (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003). Patriarchy locates power in society in the hands of men who dominate women in all spheres of social life (Whitehead 2002:86). It can be quite limiting as it fails to capture dimensions of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality within the 'masculinity is power' matrix (Wright 2005:244). The central weakness of patriarchy is that it fails to take adequate account of the fact that not all men are dominant over women and that some men, especially those adopting hegemonic masculinity personae, dominate other men as well as women (Connell 1995). It is not by any means a redundant term, but its use in analysis should be tempered by an acknowledgement that patriarchy fails to reveal all the complexities of masculinities (Whitehead 2002). Crucial, therefore, to a more complete consideration of masculinities is the role of hegemonic masculinity.¹⁶ The term refers to *the* masculinity that is perceived to be the legitimate, acceptable and preferred masculinity (Donaldson 1993). It refers to a maleness that is in essence white, middle class, heterosexual, homophobic and competitive (Kimmel et al 2005) and that involves the domination of women (Bird 1996). There are several assumptions to be drawn from this, the first is that the socio-cultural milieu that voices maleness is dominated by white races which although relevant to the period of Victorian England negates the existence of any male power outside white privilege in other time/space arenas. Secondly it presumes the socio-economic status of capitalism creating a stratified class system in which the middle classes are powerful strata. Thirdly is the presumption that heterosexuality is the only sexuality with power and expressed as homophobia, the power of men not heterosexual is negated therefore arguably

¹⁶ The term itself (hegemony) is adopted from Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) who used it comment on the dominance of one class over others. See A. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

‘Heterosexuality and homophobia are the bedrock of hegemonic masculinity’ (Donaldson 1993: 646), yet despite any limitations that these assumptions might have to modern society – hegemony reflects the views of and fits the Victorian era. Finally the domination of women by men in social, cultural and economic life is evidenced by a range of indices including the spheres of work, politics and life chances (Bradley et al 2000, Cornwall and Lindisfarne 2005). These commentators suggest women are subjected to a prejudice that restricts their progress economically and in life generally through their subordinated position as women.

Hegemonic masculinity has a relatively modern but nonetheless substantial history, which is still highly contested (Hearn 2004; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This reflects the fact that any study of masculinity, including studies of its hegemonic form, is fraught with complexities (Dalley-Trim 2007:212). Part of this complexity is a redefining of what hegemonic masculinity actually is. Hearn (2004) calls for a realignment of thinking around hegemonic masculinity, and, while not negating its use, calls for greater consideration to be given to a ‘hegemony of men’. I have taken this to mean that men’s practices need to be scrutinised in a more open less prescriptive way by being able, for example, to employ the analytical toolkit designed for this thesis. Opening up the debate to consider the hegemony of men rather than hegemony of masculinity allows this research to examine men’s practices in war as described in their writings.

Hegemonic masculinity does not have to be the most prevalent type of maleness in any given social setting, just the most powerful (Mooney 1998). Therefore, although a range of masculinities can exist in any given society, culture or institution for example heterosexual or gay masculinity or what Demetriou (2001) defines as a blend of masculinities the hegemonic form takes priority in privilege. This hegemonic form of masculinity presents as the ‘most honoured way of being a man’ (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:849) and is predicated on the power heterosexual men hold over non heterosexual men and women. It

can be argued, therefore, that hegemonic masculinity dominates gender relations (both male to female and male to male) and the social interactions of everyday life. It is given high status and overriding power and authority and this comes about in a process whereby cultural definitions of hegemonic masculinity and power are reinforced and non hegemonic subjugated (Segal 1993:626). To illustrate, the core of this research military masculinity, is a good example to consider. Military masculinity embraces hegemonic masculinity as the ideal form and will reinforce and reward heterosexual behaviour in men who embrace the warrior code, by for example giving medals for bravery or applauding and attaching kudos to what is deemed heterosexual behaviour. The same system will punish those who do not conform to this ideal either by ostracising them or worse still abusing them. The army for example as an institution does not necessarily condone the use of violence that maintains hegemonic masculinity but has the capacity for it and the threat of it (Morrell 1998:609). This is explored in the data chapters where for example those who exemplify the warrior code are rewarded with the respect and admiration of their comrades and those who do not are vilified as not being real soldiers and real men. The data chapters also suggest that the status, power and authority of hegemonic soldiery masculinity can be more fragile than the above commentators claim. So although hegemonic masculinity appears to be a blue print for military masculinity hard wired into the psyche of soldiers my data analysis will suggest it is not so straightforward.

The class nature of hegemonic masculinity is another area examined in the data chapters. Class is the sociological category most closely associated with industrial and capitalist societies. It offers a means of determining the position of individuals within a stratified society and locates them in terms of wealth, occupational status and position and life chances, lifestyle and educational achievement (Cowell 2011). This reinforces the idea that hegemonic masculinity may be compared, not only to the position of women, but also

class position of other men. One important facet of this understanding is the ranking of men in the social hierarchy, that is, through class. Hegemonic masculinity purports to have a heterosexual, white and middle class power base. Working class masculinity refuses to mimic its middle class counterpart, even though 'working class masculinity is often conceptualised synonymously with white working class men' (Archer et al 2001:433).

There appears to be a class distinction here. Jewke's (2005) observations suggest that there is an association between masculinity and an excessive display of aggression and violent behaviour with working class culture. Yet Nayak (2003) contends working class hegemonic masculinity roots itself historically in the physicality of working class lives, something it expresses through the subordination of women and any masculinities other than heterosexual. For example working in traditionally heavy industry dominated the experience of many working class men. Power and strength became signifiers of a much prized heterosexual masculinity which can be identified in the writings of 'Tommy' during the SAW.

What does distinguish the working class/middle class dichotomy is that the hegemonic masculinity of the latter is more powerful because of the economic and cultural position it holds and the ways it can impose its will on those beneath it in station. Men, and especially powerful men, are perceived to be the gender that has been imbued with the rationality necessary to embrace the complexities of both public and private life, the two spheres in which they dominate. These powerful class elites are the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995, Bradley et al. 2000); and in terms of this research, they are a good match for the officer class of the SAW. Nevertheless my data chapters suggest that the relationships between 'Tommy' and his Officers and indeed between officers themselves suggest the lines are not so clearly drawn and the distinction of clear hegemonic class deference is blurred.

The relationships between masculinity, class and race/ethnicity are complex (Archer et al. 2001), with an assumption that masculinity is not a uni-dimensional monolith but a multiplicity of elements. The link between hegemonic masculinity and race is embedded in white supremacist notions of superiority to black masculinity (Ferber 2007). Hegemonic masculinity is ‘powerful in being inflected with issues of class and “race”’ (Frosh et al 2005:38), and the idea of white male supremacy locates non-white males in a pattern of masculinity in which black males are more ‘childish and excitable than whites’ (Francis 2002:637). This allows white men to relegate their black rivals to a position of subordination, inferiority, hyper sexuality, and alignment with the lowest form of humanity (Ferber 2007: 11). Non-white males have to be controlled and policed for their own good by a white hegemonic masculinity that exudes class power. There is also the enduring history of the racial imagery of masculinity, of white superiority and black inferiority (Whitehead 2002:122). Images of heroic white men and barbaric non-white and/or non-British white men are culturally entrenched, particularly in the Western national psyche.

Part of the mythologizing of this superior white hegemonic masculinity has been associated with sport, especially sports in which young men engage (Spector-Mersel 2006:77). The association of sporting metaphors with hegemonic masculinity will acquire importance in this account, insofar as the sporting metaphor and its attendant hegemonic baggage (Mangan and McKenzie 2008) will be seen to feature heavily in the soldiers’ writing. This metaphor for hegemonic masculinity is an important vehicle that promoted and still promotes a trope of heterosexual male toughness, where effeminacy in men and homosexuality are scorned and rendered inferior. However homosociality, non sexualised bonding of males, the camaraderie of soldier mates for example was encouraged and respected.

Homosociality is directly and dynamically linked to the ‘maintenance of hegemonic masculinity’ (Bird 1996:121) and is, in essence, ‘close friendship and intimacy between males that is distinguishable from homosexuality’ (Beynon 2002: 162). This can be observed in military settings where men form a ‘bonded homosocial team’ which ‘relies on the figure of woman as a sexualised “other”’ (Woodward and Winter 2004:292). There is a sense that homosocial male bonding is a necessity if effective fighting units are to exist (Adelman 2007) and this research exposes this for analytical scrutiny in the data chapters. It is the boundary inconsistencies of homosociality that can impact on men’s everyday lives, where there can be some blurring of the parameters of acceptable and non-acceptable hegemonic manly behaviour. This can be registered in the ostensibly homosocial non-sexual relationships developed between men in general and, in the context of this thesis, the substantial dynamic of soldiery comradeship. For Kimmel, ‘masculinity is largely a homosocial enactment’ (1996:7) which is sometimes born out of the male work situation where there is ‘a shared masculine heritage’ (Nayak 2003:148).

Within a military masculinity there is a perceived need to ‘differentiate male companionship from homosexuality’ (Smalley 2005:197). The sometimes violent separation of male homosexuality from male homosociality can be explained by observing that ‘both share a certain complex commitment to masculine solidarity, and are at times barely distinguishable in this respect’(Brickell 2006:92). In his study of homosociality, Keisling argues that ‘men clearly form friendships and larger friendship groups, and must manage to connect personally and emotionally’ (2005:695). He goes on to say that men must also try to make themselves appear ‘cool’ and admirable to other men. This idea of homosocial ‘cool’ is also referred to in Kaplan’s work on male bonding in Israel where solidarity, shared risk and challenging conventional norms are played out ‘by a pose of “being cool”’ (Kaplan 2007:57). This notion of ‘cool’ equates well with Goffman’s ideas (2005) about ‘character contests’ in

which men engage in order to compete with other men; this will be examined further in section (2.3.5).

Using hegemonic masculinity as part of the tool kit that this thesis employs to decipher the soldiers' writings is undoubtedly valuable, but far from infallible. I suggest that hegemonic masculinity as a conceptual tool is useful, but it should not be taken as the sole arbiter of all things manly. Men's practices – how they live out their lives and interact with both women and other men – are perhaps more complex than even 'hegemonic masculinity' or the realigned 'hegemony of men' can account for (Moller 2007:263). Its chief strength lies in the ability to promote a more coherent explanation of why masculinities are structured in the way they are. What it does not do so well is to allow for the interrogation of the individual agency of men and how as individual actors they can have control of their behaviour as men, and that somewhat weakens it as a conceptual tool. However, as this thesis suggests, if it is used in conjunction with the two other conceptual strands (performativity and dramaturgy), then it is not only strengthened by them, but strengthens them also. By being aware of its limitations while positioning it as partial in the overall analytical framework then its analytical potency can be redeemed.

2.3.4 Performativity:

In a distinctly different analysis, Butler (1990, 1993, 2004) argues that gender is a fluid construct that changes according to time and context where men and women 'do gender'. For Butler, all humans put on a gender performance, this will essentially define masculinity; whether the core presentation of masculinity changes over time is irrelevant as it will always, according to Butler, be a performance. However, this performance is set in routine where the reality of gender is reinforced through such repetition, and the fictive nature of gender is maintained (Hey 2006:440). Such performances are arguably, already 'pre-scripted' (Hey 2006:444) and have been inculcated through for example social processes

like education, family, literature and popular culture more of which will be described in the following Chapter Four. Through a lens of a militarised hegemony the realisation of such discursive enterprise positions the SAW soldier for example as warrior or wimp, brave and honourable or weak and dishonourable. Warrior masculinity therefore demands and sets acceptable parameters of performances of masculinity and manliness deviation from which will carry sanctions. This is particularly relevant to a thesis like this which is situated in a specific historical time frame.

Butler argues from the corpus of her work that gender is not a universal construct and that a fresh approach is needed to adequately analyse it. I agree with this sentiment and appropriate for my tool kit her particular analytical argument that gender (masculinity) is a performative act (1990) that in order to operate must be successfully repeated (Butler 2004). As a constituent part of my tripartite analytical tool kit the element of performativity that she identifies allows the soldiers narratives to be interpreted and analysed by searching for those diary entries and letters that demonstrate the repetitive nature of how the soldiers seem driven to demonstrate their masculinity. The data chapters will not only give examples of how 'Tommy' and his officers engage in a discourse of manliness which through its repetition nourishes and maintains the hegemony of the combatants of the SAW but how such performativity for some soldiers becomes conflicting.

Butler argues that men and women should not be primarily identified by their biological sex, but that gender is better analysed if we make use of the concept of performativity, where:

the regulatory norms of 'sex' work in a performative fashion to constitute the materialibility of bodies and more specifically, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative.' (Butler 1993:2)

Put in the simplest terms, 'Performativity' is what a person does at a particular moment in time with respect to their gender (Butler 1990:25). This again can help to locate masculinity

as relational to time and the period of the SAW. By contextualising the performance of masculinity in the Victorian era the antecedents of this time relational masculinity can be teased out and scrutinised. Therefore the performativity that was actually engaged in by SAW soldiers can be judged against the performativity that was the prevailing hegemonic ideal. The hegemonic ideal for soldiers in the SAW positioned bravery as a key element but as the soldiers narratives will reveal not every soldier was brave and for some their actions were deemed cowardly by their comrades.

The repetition of masculinity however it is presented helps reinforce what is in effect a fictionalised, or fictive, set of behaviours. Soldiers of the SAW are therefore obliged to ‘do gender’, perform their masculinity (Hey 2006:439). The data chapters of this thesis expose how the repetitive nature of performing masculinity in the SAW is for some soldiers a matter of routine as Butler suggests but that for others their sense of agency and conscience intervene to challenge the performative nature of masculinity. Therefore although masculinity can be interpreted as that set of behaviours and presentation of self that require constant ‘maintenance’ and this is achieved by the repetitive performing of masculinity there is still the opportunity for men to determine whether or not they want to embrace the prevailing hegemonic masculinity Hey (2006:439). The data chapters will illustrate how some soldiers acquiesce to the hegemonic status quo and how others challenge this and assert their own masculinity.

What has historically been considered masculine behaviour is reinforced ritualistically through coercive mechanisms (Butler 1990). These mechanisms can include peer pressure where men are pressured to perform their masculinity in a specific and approved way for example being seen to be tough. Or alternatively, in institutions for example the military, where not being aggressive is unacceptable and an antithesis of the warrior soldier (Moon 2005:68, Butterworth 2006:141). In the SAW, soldiers were placed

under enormous pressure to conform to the archetype soldier as warrior image. This pressure came from their comrades to perform as manly warriors side by side in shared manly combat and also from their own internalised values and belief systems causing some great emotional anxiety as they tried to negotiate their way through the SAW. This is where the performativity of Butler can be used effectively to help tease out the nuances and subtleties of SAW soldiers masculinity in action.

In Butler's view, there is a sense in which gender 'itself becomes a free floating artifice with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female' (Butler 1990:6). This argument allows for the deconstruction of gender roles in society and in the context of this work allows the narratives of the SAW soldier to be considered as gendered scripts to be analysed. The fact that men are associated with a particular set of behaviours that are socially and culturally reinforced could, in principle, be stripped back in order to gain greater insight into the theory that gender assignments and gender roles are purely a social construction and that the interplay of dominant forces over a long period of time is integral to our understanding of gender in itself. Overall, Butlers 'radical anti-essentialist critique' and consideration of gender construction has given a new impetus to the study of gender and provides a means of analysis that blocks the prevailing heteronormative thinking that can govern much of our thinking around gender (Hey 2006:446). My use of Butler permits a broader consideration of how men as soldiers feel the need to 'perform' masculinity and be manly and how such performance carries with it a coercive framework where non-compliance with the core gender model is punished through for example the invocation of shame.

Men take part in a tacit collective agreement to perform masculinity (Butler 1990), and this is achieved through an endless recital of social mores and social conventions. By

speaking about them performatively, they remain artificial but are reinforced as social constructs. For SAW soldiers their camaraderie can help reinforce the performativity of their masculinity, 'doing gender' translates into 'doing soldiery'. The status quo of masculine hegemonic power is maintained partially by the repetitive nature of 'doing gender', through the way we walk, talk and interact as manly men, in the context of this work the narratives of the soldiers also act as a conduit for them to 'do gender', to do masculinity. Gender is an act which is taken from a rehearsed culturally determined script and which we play out (Ezzy 1998:247). Hey suggests, 'Performing the self entails the 'obligation' to do gender not as an act of intentionality, but as 'performance' already set up by a pre-scripted rehearsal', (2006:444). Herein lies the tension I have with the concept of performativity, that is, the active agency of the actor concerned.

Certainly within soldiering, the collective can coerce manly behaviour and sanction any deviation from the warrior ideal by the use of emotional mechanisms such as embarrassment and shame but that would assume that all soldiers simply engage with masculinity at the level of the automaton. This I will go on to argue is not always a 'given' for the SAW soldier. However I argue that the use of performativity does in the context of the tool kit allow for an enhanced analytical scrutiny of soldiers masculinity especially as an integral component part. The set of mechanisms referred to above, embarrassment and shame, connected to the role of emotions in the analysis of masculinity is what the following section of the chapter will now consider.

2.3.5 The sociology of emotion and masculinity:

The sociological study of emotion forms an integral part of the theoretical analysis of the empirical chapters of this research and as in previous sections is not being offered as a stand-alone analytical model, but as an integral part of a triangulation or tri-partite of

theoretical approaches. Some sociological commentators for example, Ng and Kidder (2010:195), suggest that, 'sociologists are beginning to uncover the relevance of emotion', and I would further argue further that an enhanced understanding and use of the sociological knowledge of emotion is beneficial to sociological analysis. We need to enhance our understanding and go beyond, 'how individuals and society interact in emotionally charged moments that are outside of "ordinary" experience' (Ng and Kidder 2010:193) to one that also considers how men interact with each other in terms of their masculinity. According to Turner and Stets (2006:25), the sociology of emotions is a collective set of five theories: dramaturgical theories, symbolic interactionist theories, interaction ritual theories, power and status/exchange theories For the purpose of this research, I will focus on the dramaturgical and theoretical work of Goffman (2005) and Scheff (2006) but will also refer to the work of Hochschild (1979).

Hochschild writing in *The American Journal of Sociology* was one of the first sociologists to consider the sociological nuances of emotion in her study of flight attendants (1979). Hochschild in essence considers how emotions are managed and how emotions can be manipulated and how for example, 'Social factors can enter in, to alter how we expect a role to be held or played', (1979:560). For flight attendants it was how they presented themselves to the paying public as 'cheery' which could be oppositional to their real emotional state. For the soldiers in the SAW I argue that the social factors impacting their expression of manliness could be shaped by the twin pressures of meeting the expected hegemonic expression of manliness and the consummate fear of violating that same expression, for example being perceived as weak and not manly. This is what Hochschild referred to as the 'burden' of trying to, 'obey latent laws' (1979:573). For soldiers in the SAW these laws referred to the manly script they were obliged to follow. The dramaturgical strand of the sociology of emotion is used in preference to its alternatives. This is because its

theoretical position offers an opportunity to analyse critically the writings of the soldiers of the SAW, and to do so more extensively than might be done through other strands as it is the dramaturgical that refers extensively to notions of shame and the emotional context where it is employed. In the case of the SAW soldier embarrassment and shame plus the fear of being exposed as unwarrior like and subsequently failing to embody the hegemonic manliness ideal was at times a heavy emotional burden for ‘Tommy’ and his officers. Employing the sociology of Goffman (1990, 2005) also allows the data to be analysed in terms of how soldiers manipulated their ‘front of house self’, that is engaged in impression management in order to seek the approval and approbation of their comrades in arms. It is particularly relevant in that it also offers a means to analyse total institutions; as Goffman’s seminal work of the late 1950s focused on asylums, and it can be argued that the military fits well into this context of ‘total institution’.

Dramaturgical theory takes as its core the ‘micro world of emotions and relationships’ and as such it ‘constitutes the moment-by-moment texture of our lives... intimately connected to the larger world’ (Scheff 2006 viii). It does not involve itself in determining why behaviour takes place but rather attempts to contextualise it. In essence, dramaturgical theory determines that individual actors (for the purpose of this research, soldiers of the SAW) follow a culturally determined script (e.g. the Victorian sense of manliness of the nineteenth century *fin de siècle* referred to in detail in Chapter Four) and that actors can deviate to some extent from the script, but not too far out of fear of sanction. Dramaturgical theory suggests that to deviate too much from the manliness script would invoke negative emotions of embarrassment and shame (Scheff 1988, Goffman 2005). For Scheff, shame is described ‘in terms of its significance for group connectedness, how it serves as a warning signal of threat to the bond’ (Scheff 2006: 144). This theme of the importance of ‘shame’ in the lives of human beings is one well developed for example in the work of Elias (2000).

Recent work examining the difference in classroom behaviour between Japanese children and children in the United States of America suggests that the differences in behaviour were predicated on the suggestion that Japan had more of 'shame culture in everyday life' (Bear et al. 2009). Goffman's (2005) definition of 'embarrassment' as used by Scheff (2006) is described in terms of a number of 'emotional disturbances... dryness of the mouth, and tenseness of the muscles... visible and invisible flustering'. Embarrassment and shame are very strong emotional reactions and were arguably exacerbated in the historical era of the SAW, when men's emotional responses were to be guarded to the point of repression (Tosh 2005), as detailed in Chapter Four. Within this context of embarrassment and shame, the data chapters will describe how actors (soldiers) engage in a variety of behaviours that try to convey their compliance with the prescribed and proscribed cultural script of manliness in order to save face, even though they may be in disagreement (Goffman 2005). There is, in effect, a marked discrepancy between what actors feel emotionally and what they portray to their audience (Turner and Sets 2006:27) and men must 'put on a convincing manhood act' especially for other men (Schwalbe 2005 in Schrock and Schwalbe 2009:279). In the context of the SAW soldiers performed their hegemonic masculinity in front of an audience of other soldiers who stand as the perceived arbiters of the potency of the performance. Just as importantly therefore it is how others react to the potency of the masculinity presented that forms an essential part of the overall presentation of the manly self (Goffman 1990). For the purpose of this research using the broad sweep of the sociology of emotion will allow me to examine in a unique and richly analytical manner the writings of those soldiers who make reference to their emotional conflicts. Specifically the data of Chapter Seven will help to illustrate this much more energetically. To the present writer's knowledge this analytical framework has never been used in the critical examination of the masculinity of soldiers in the SAW.

Although dramaturgical theory addresses ‘the importance of culture in defining emotions’ (Scheff 2006:27), I would argue that this needs to be interlinked with the previous sub-sections (2.3i and ii) which examined the role of hegemonic masculinity and performativity respectively. The emphases on the roles of individual actors are centrally important to dramaturgical theory. There is an incredibly strong emotional demand to respond appropriately to an audience whose disapproval would elicit shame and embarrassment (responding to the hegemonic ideal), and, consequently, individual actors will continue to engage in (perform) ‘emotional’ or ‘impression management’ as countermeasures (Scheff 2006:44, 45). This was arguably the daily concern of SAW soldiers, whose manipulations of the presentation of the self (Goffman 1990) were responses to the all important military definitions of the individual as brave, heroic, stoic or weak. It was crucially important that such self-presentation should take place before an audience of soldier mates on whose good opinion each individual depended. Goffman further defines what he calls the ‘cult of masculinity’ where ‘character contests’ – that is, a display of certain desirable masculine qualities – are played out in the behaviour of men interacting with each other in order to identify whose character demonstrates the most ‘courage, gameness, integrity and composure’ (2005: 229). Scheff interprets Goffman to mean that only ‘masculine men have character’; such men are hyper-masculine, which is not only virtuous but ‘akin to courage and integrity’ (2006:163). This has a direct resonance with the development of Victorian ‘manly virtues’ that will be examined in Chapter Four.

For Kimmel intrinsic to masculinity as much as manly virtues is the fact that, ‘Historically and developmentally, masculinity has been defined as the flight from women’ (1994:126). More than that, he argued that the overarching emotion of masculinity is ‘fear – of one’s sexuality, emotions, and not least other men – the fear we will be exposed as less than men’ (Kimmel 1994:487). This fear entails, for example, a fear by boys of not being

good enough in the manliness stakes, not good enough to join ‘the’ club coveted by ‘malestream’ masculinity, and always being on trial, having to prove one’s manliness (Kimmel 1996). In terms of this thesis the emotional fear of not making the grade in manliness is a spectre that is evidenced in the soldiers narratives where character contests as described above by Goffman (2005: 240) interplay with everyday soldiering in the SAW. The lived lives of soldiers in the SAW enmeshed with the emotional demands that call for strict adherence to the hegemonic ideal are internalised to such a degree, whereby failure to present a manly self can have catastrophic consequences. Each soldier’s narrative becomes a microscope with which to examine his emotional self and becomes the lens through which critical analysis of his masculinity is made.

While acknowledging the value of his mentor Goffman’s theories, Scheff (2006) went on to criticise him for dealing with the ‘micro’ social world to the exclusion of the ‘macro’ social world. He demonstrated that the inclusion of the ‘macro’ realm allowed him to address an analysis of large-scale behaviour such as conflict (2006: ix). In consequence, the study of war falls legitimately under the general rubric of the sociology of emotion in general and dramaturgical analysis in particular. In his further study of masculinity and emotions, Scheff identified what he describes as ‘the silence/violence pattern’, arguing that, even as young boys, males are taught that open displays of vulnerable feelings of grief, fear and shame are signs of weakness. For this reason, men learn to suppress such negative emotions (2006:161-182).

The playing out of warrior narratives by young boys is encouraged, so that violence is valorised and made acceptable (Jordan and Cowan 1995:728). The continued suppression of vulnerable feelings manifests itself in arenas where males will hide true emotions and be actively hostile and violent when faced with threatening situations, thus leading to the notion of ‘silence/violence’ in relation to their masculinity. The lust for fighting for example that

some of the SAW soldiers express is arguably a direct result of men repressing emotions leaving them vulnerable to explosions of emotions which can then be played out in collective violence of war (Scheff 2006:172). Scheff further alludes to the concept of nationalism (which I take to mean patriotism too): 'Without invoking the emotional/relational world, it is difficult to understand the fervour of nationalism. Untold millions of people have gratuitously laid down their lives and taken the lives of others in the name of their nation' (2006:186). He goes on to comment that 'There is another much smaller group that may demand blind loyalty, the immediate family' (2006:186). MacEoin in his discussion on suicide bombers in the context of the recent history of the Middle East makes the valid point that in the wider context of religion suicide bombers die for their religious 'family' (2009). This is important because – as will be detailed in the course of this work – soldiers of the SAW (as many other soldiers in many different conflicts) see their comrades, their mates, as their close immediate family. In the empirical chapters, I shall demonstrate how patriotism at the micro level of the soldier can become a mix of blind nationalism/patriotism and loyalty to the immediate family of soldier mates.

The inclusion of the sociology of emotion in this section is not without theoretical significance. Certainly, my focus on the 'micro' social world of emotions is undoubtedly beneficial from an analytical viewpoint; but the need to integrate a more structured theoretical framework for analysis is also essential. The inclusion of Connell's theory of hegemony and Butler's theory on performativity gives such a framework, but I argue that they too can be given much greater substance and analytical purchase by considering it side by side with the sociology of emotion. By allowing the sociology of emotion to be integrated into the analysis of the research, I argue I can more purposefully and critically examine the mask of masculinity which allows men to repress their emotions or alternatively possibly explode in anger and violence. The presentation of a masculine or manly self is a powerful

signifier of how males use the performance of manly acts to reinforce and legitimise their masculinity and demonstrate their 'manhood' even though it is contingent on variables such as culture and history (Kimmel 1996). I strongly agree with Ng and Kidder when they suggest that studying emotion, 'Is a bone fide sociological phenomenon - shifts the focus from what *is* emotion to what emotion *does* to alter or reproduce social relations' (2010:199).

2.3.6 Summary

The sections above have examined in some detail several of the key issues that arise in the intellectual debate around masculinity and the social construction of masculinities. The framework for my analysis of the diaries and letters using the 'tool kit' designed for this thesis has also been described through consideration of the merits or demerits of each individual element. Out of that, I have reached the conclusion that, as a joint enterprise, the three strands of the analysis are complementary and stronger than the sum of the whole. The glue that binds them is that each has core but incomplete explanations of masculinity but in combining them into an inter-sectional analysis there is a strengthening of the analytical capability.¹⁷ The next section considers which themes have been identified for analysis using the 'tool kit'.

2.4 Military Masculinity and the SAW: Literature and Research Issues

In general, it has been argued that war and the military are key sites of masculinity (Morgan 1994, Higate 2003). The relationship between 'militaristic values' and the way for example 'hegemonic masculinity is both created and produced' is a closely symbiotic one (Higate and Hopton 2005:444) to the extent that: 'Hegemonic masculinity is not just competitive masculinity, not just warrior masculinity but also victorious masculinity. Defeat

¹⁷ The combining of research methods has been successfully used in feminist research, see O'Neill (2003).

in war is seen as inherently feminizing' (Jones 2006:454) and if so labelled the SAW soldier faced humiliation, shame and embarrassment. The masculinity and SAW nexus is, I will argue, the result of a combination of unique social and cultural dynamics that produced a certain type of desirable masculinity that became identified as manliness which in turn interfaces with the masculinity of the SAW. As early as the mid nineteenth century manliness and its attendant ideals became the norm (Hallgrimsdotir and Adams 2004:277) and this interfaced well with a military masculinity that demanded for example patriotism and duty; bravery; stoicism and adherence to an imperial masculinity borne out of a heterosexual racial superiority (Beynon 2002). In the SAW the valorised hegemonic manly soldier ideal was the brave warrior (Braudy 2003) and his nemesis was the coward (Barret 2001) and cowardice on the field of battle for the SAW soldier was the ultimate emotional humiliation (Spiers 1999).

War itself therefore becomes an 'educator in manliness' (Mosse 1996:115) where the very act of war can be perceived as a mechanism for the 'social invigoration for the nation' (Braudy 2003:29). This in fact was related more to an invigoration through a celebration of the virility of the soldiers of the nation and their embrace of duty and honour (Varoglu and Bicaksciz 2005:584-585). For the SAW soldier this invitation to manliness meant realising the imperial mission in the army of the Queen; exercising a military masculinity predefined and performatively reiterated.

Military masculinity materialises as a plurality of masculinities reflecting the very fluid nature of masculinities (Arkin and Dobrovsky 1978). This fluid nature of military masculinity can encompass anything from the, 'emotionally tough warrior' (Woodward and Winter 2004:289) to those who evaded duty and consequently deemed lesser soldiers (Barrett 2001, Whitehead and Barrett 2001:77-99). Integral to the SAW soldiers psyche (Dawson 2005:1-8) is the hegemonic heterosexual/heteronormative manly ideal of the nineteenth century. This creates a military masculinity that is the 'most extreme expression of what

Connell terms hegemonic masculinity' (Hopton 2003:113). The nexus of masculinity and the SAW is, I will argue, the result of a combination of unique social and cultural dynamics that produced a certain desirable type of masculinity; this, in turn, came to be defined as manliness which interfaces with the military masculinity prevalent at the time of the SAW. This strongly suggests that there is a desirable intersection between the playing out of military masculinities and the socio-cultural exigencies influences at any given historical period (Rodgers 2005). Higate (2003:205) however, suggests that, despite this, something he calls the 'combat warrior ethic' persists through time. Within that ethic, the code of warrior militarised masculinity remains constant.

2.4 .1 Identifying core research themes

This sub-section will consider military masculinity by highlighting the overarching research themes of the thesis. The military masculinity that surfaced in the narratives SAW soldier included, among other things, patriotism; bravery; honour; a fear of dishonour; camaraderie; lust for fighting; stoicism; and adherence to an imperial masculinity borne out of a heteronormative class along with racial superiority (Beynon 2002). For a man not to appear to embrace these attributes of manliness was the antithesis of what 'real men' did. Thus, for example not to play to the script of the warrior soldier was perceived as weak, effeminate and unmanly (Barret 2001). From the perspective of the analytical tool kit employed, the stage is now set within the SAW for masculinity to be played out by soldier actors reading from pre-determined and idealised scripts of warrior manliness but with the opportunity to write their own.

Importantly, military masculinity like plain masculinity is not a unitary term, but is rather a multiplicity of understandings and definitions (Hopton 1999, Higate 2003). Historically, military masculinities have varied from ancient warrior bands made up of male lovers (Braudy 2003: xii) to armies in more recent times, devoted to hegemonic

heterosexuality. These latter have included military groups from the nineteenth century and the SAW. Primacy is given to heterosexuality and the military subordinates all other masculinities other than heteronormative and hegemonic manliness and, ‘stoicism, heroism, competitiveness and camaraderie’, become the preferred facets of men’s military behaviour (Peniston-Bird 2003:32).

The core research themes: manly imagery; patriotism; bravery; camaraderie and relationships; lust for fighting; stoicism and honour emerged by applying the bespoke analytical toolkit designed for the thesis as an organising lens for all the narratives examined. Each of themes appearing in the data chapters will be briefly addressed with particular reference as to how they interplay with the tool kit.

Manly imagery/Patriotism/Bravery

The manly imagery theme examines how the hegemonic materiality of the SAW soldier manifested itself in their narratives. The SAW would be celebrated and held up as the epitome of British Imperialism, imbued with an ‘imagined’ mystique and manliness (Dawson 2005). This utilises Connells concept of *hegemonic masculinity* juxtaposed with Butler’s *performativity* to critically examine how the ideology of masculinity, that is how it was supposed to be operationalised with how it actually was performed. The SAW soldier may well have been schooled on how to be a manly warrior by following a well defined hegemonic script but how that actually materialised and was lived out performatively in soldiers narratives is I argue for many of them challenging, complex and contradictory. The manly imagery of the SAW soldier detailed in his narratives ranges from warrior to coward and presents a corporeal reality of how important manly imagery was to ‘Tommy’ and his officers.

Patriotism as Miller suggests ‘is significant favouritism towards one’s compatriots in deciding whether to support serious use of political coercion’ (1997:166). Fletcher further

suggests that ‘the springs of patriotism lay in the Victorian notion of manhood’ (2005:532). This theme too draws heavily on the hegemonic ideal and how it is performed. The SAW soldier initially appears in his narratives as patriotic. This reinforces the hegemonic ideal that commands a patriotic zeal that manifests itself performatively over and over again seemingly contagious in its spread. Here analysis will be employed to tease out the nuances that suggest a wavering patriotism as the SAW progresses.

Bravery in the field of battle is the zenith of soldierly attributes and achievement. The privileged position that can be acquired by males through the prestige accorded them by warfare is linked particularly to the exercise of heroism (Horne in Dudinck 2004:22-37). There is a close link between manliness and soldierly behaviour on the battlefield (Goldstein 2006:274), where the test of how manly you are is best met and judged by other men during battle itself (Meyer 2004) in a manifestation of the Goffmanesque ‘character contests’ (2005). This resonates with Butler’s (2004) notion of performativity, where men arguably adopt the prevailing hegemonic manly persona in order to survive and the analysis will allow the analytical overlay of the hegemony of bravery with an emotional analysis of bravery in order to more fully reveal the critical content of soldier’s bravery.

Camaraderie, Tommy and his Officers, Lust for fighting

Among other things, military masculinity is predicated on ‘camaraderie’ (Peniston-Bird 2003:32). In the SAW heterosexual homosociality – in other words, camaraderie – was wholeheartedly embraced (Dawson 2005). Homosociality, camaraderie, mateship or male bonding are, at their simplest level, vital parts of military masculinity (Bourke 2000). Taken together, they form a potent symbol of acceptable heteronormativity. Woodward and Winter have linked this bonding to popular discourses relating to the ‘bands of brothers’ of combat

soldiers (2004:289). Analysis here will reveal how important the emotional bonds formed between soldiers can be even to the point of challenging the existing hegemonic structures.

The manly Imperial soldiery of the SAW was an amalgam of the social mores and etiquette that clearly identified what was expected as manly behaviour. It has been argued that this was drawn from a middle class code of conduct that is termed 'manliness' (Tosh 1999, Mangan and Walvin 1987). Notwithstanding the relevance of an analysis from the perspective of a middle class officer, there has been scant recognition of the experiences of the working class 'Tommy' and the perspective he might bring to manliness in the SAW. In his narratives 'Tommy' does not always perform the role of unquestioning subordinate; acceptable behaviour in war becomes blurred, less rule-bound, and open to an individualistic interpretation of appropriate codes of conduct. The narratives reveal a fracturing of the hegemonic ideal as the manly performances displayed across both 'Tommy' and his officers become increasingly questioned.

The nineteenth century produced a socio-cultural climate in which the only 'real' demonstration of manliness was heteronormative and was accomplished through heterosexual behaviour and practices; this will be examined in detail in Chapter Four. Referring to contemporary times, Hockey (2003) records that, in the military, heterosexual/heteronormative practices can be taken to an extreme, with displays of hyper-masculinity. This extreme behaviour can be seen when SAW soldiers respond to being pent up in siege situations, they relish any opportunity to engage the enemy with an explosion of bloodlust and violence. The soldier who does not fit the military masculine ethos of 'strength, bravery, and fortitude' and cannot be deemed an 'emotionally tough warrior hero' is ostracised and denied the status of a real soldier (Woodward and Winter 2004:289).

Stoicism / Honour / Dishonour

Honour and dishonour feature to a significant extent in much of the discourse relating to manliness and the SAW interwoven with the ideal of Victorian manliness and the execution of the SAW by an imperial soldiery Krebs (2004:90-91). There is also a suggestion that there was a growing sensibility how men conduct themselves in war where ‘proper wartime conduct relied on ideas about masculinity – about proper male conduct’ (Krebs 2004:80). Not only is the concept of honour ‘the most lasting cultural mediator between the individual soldier and his social group’, but it justifies the use of violence to defend them, so that the very form of violence is codified as honourable or dishonourable (Braudy 2003:49). What is captured by the soldiers’ narratives is the confusion over the portrayal of the hegemonic ideal of an honour that is imbued with rules and conventions that shape the contours of combat, and what actually occurs. The narratives reveal the tension and conflict soldiers had in interpreting these rules of honourable engagement and using the tool kit helps disentangle this tension by creating awareness around how these rules were created, maintained and performed by ‘Tommy’ and his officers.

Victorian hegemonic masculinity or ‘imperial masculinity’ as embraced by the soldiers of the SAW (Hall 1992) incorporated emotional stoicism alongside heroism and camaraderie (Peniston-Bird 2003:32). The Imperial soldier was to be a beacon of discipline for body and mind built on the ideas of muscular Christianity and the Boys Brigade founded in 1883 whose badge proudly carried the words ‘Sure and Steadfast’, thus shaping the future Imperial soldier (Pakenham 2004). The power and respect of the individual soldier would often rely on his ability to perform this emotional stoicism.

2.4.2 Summary

It can be argued that a soldiering masculinity is contingent, among other things, on the historical period, the place, and the local context, as well as on race, class and ethnicity

(Hearn 1998). In this context, the nineteenth-century military masculinities of the SAW came to be predicated on a number of idealised manifestations of manliness (Weeks 1995). Male behaviour and, in turn, the behaviour of soldiers in the SAW were being judged by prescribed ideals (patriotism, bravery, aggression, stoicism, honour) and their proscribed inversions (weakness, effeminacy, cowardice, dishonour); in this way, the presentation of the soldier self became either valorised or demonized (Barrett 2001). These soldiers were arguably the enforcers of the imperial intentions of Britain, producing a 'new ideology of beneficent imperialism, of English superiority'. 'Tommy' was integral to the apparatus used to achieve this (Sherwood 2001).

In order to bring about this beneficent imperialism, British soldiers sometimes fought wars. In such conflicts, including the SAW, the manly soldier became the supercharged warrior whose passions for patriotism, duty, love of comrades and home exploded in a wave of hyper-masculine displays in the heat of battle. The SAW was supposed to embody civilised warfare between combatants, but this was seldom if ever the case. It had been assumed that self control could be predicated on a 'civilising process' (Elias 2000) in which self control reaches to the heart of social order. But in war, men's messy violence becomes an enemy of social peace, shattering the facile assumption of self control as the outcome of civilization. In the nineteenth century, controlling the violence of men became the centrepiece of crime control (Wiener 2004), yet war is impossible without the simultaneous presence of both the control and the violence. The manly soldier of the SAW was capable of self-control coupled with extreme courageous violence. These polarized positions were for many men extremely difficult to reconcile, especially in arenas where concepts of civilized war were tested to the extreme. This happened particularly, but not exclusively, in the final scorched earth stage of the SAW, which embraced the civilian population of the Boers in total war.

2.5 Theoretical positioning and research issues:

The above chapter has detailed key literature pertaining to masculinity and acted as a statement on how this thesis is to be theoretically positioned; it has also identified the overarching research themes. The introduction of the analytical framework for analysis (the ‘tool kit’) sets out how interpretation of the soldiers’ writings will be approached. The research is now presented as having three main strands.

i) Previous theoretical literature has to a large extent ignored the masculinity of the rank and file soldiers who fought in the SAW. Neglect of the ordinary ‘Tommy’ in terms of his masculinity is particularly true in the literature specifically focussing on the SAW and the general literature referring to the military and its masculine characteristics in the Victorian *fin de siècle*.

ii) Tangential to this is the fact that there is little or no appreciation or even recognition of the emotional agency of the ordinary soldier and his officers in the SAW. ‘Tommy’ and his subalterns appear on occasion to be operating as passive participants who just live out their masculinity and manliness. Their agency is practically invisible in the existing literature.

iii) By examining the narratives carried in the diaries and letters of the soldiers regardless of rank I will seek to redress the deficits of the theoretical literature and attempt to recognise the agency of SAW soldiers by presenting their own words for analysis.

Fig iii. The Last Letter Home



The last message home—a scene at the Orange River Hospital, South
Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.

From a Stereoview

Last updated 14 May, 2009

<http://www.boer-war.com/Gallery/Stereoview1-15.html>

07/07/2010

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

‘Narratives are much more than simply a mirror of life events; they are embedded in temporal, geographical, political, cultural fields – all of which lend shape and form to the narration. Life stories allow social scientists a view of individuals and the society in which the narrators act out their lives.’

(Karner 1998)

3.1 Introduction – The Victorian War Cabinet

I strongly agree with Karner that narratives are more than a mirror and for this research they are pivotal and the means by which I seek to analyse the masculinity of the soldiers I study. I take both soldiers diaries and letters and interrogate what soldiers actually write about in the context of their experience of the SAW around the central theme of masculinity. How this is actually achieved is addressed next.

This chapter is the ‘war cabinet’ for the thesis, where the methodology and methods used for the research are examined in detail. It will illustrate the journey that was taken, starting from my adoption of a methodological underpinning, moving on to how the letters and diaries were accessed, and finally addressing how they were analysed and categorized around the central focus of the research, the relationship between masculinity and war. The diaries and letters that constitute the core of this research are over one hundred years old: the era in which they were written seems very alien to the modern reader. In the day of the computer, blogs, e-mails, twitter, social network sites, text messages, telephones, satellite phones and a host of instant means of communication; South Africa of a century and more ago seems indescribably confined. British soldiers have left written records of most if not all of the wars that Britain has been engaged in, but this practice grows more noticeable from the

eighteenth century onwards. Military letters became prominent from about 1750 (Boyden 1990), increased in number in the Revolutionary War (The American War of Independence, 1775- 1783), and continue to flourish in the war in Afghanistan today. The British ‘Tommy’ and his officers have written letters and kept diaries that detail everything from the mundane to the murderous, from the heroism to the futility of war. The South African War of 1899-1902 produced both letters and diaries. Some, no doubt, remain locked away in family collections, and many will have succumbed by now to the ravages of time, but there are still a significant number of sources that are publicly available. There are a considerable number that are stored in archives, other materials kept in family collections have been published in book form. Another source is national newspapers, which not only received letters directly from serving soldiers but also encouraged family members to submit correspondence from their own sons and husbands as ‘letters from the veldt’ in order to give their home readership a taste of the reality of fighting in South Africa, a little known country many thousands of miles and weeks away from home.

This chapter is split into two main elements. An introductory part will situate the researcher within a qualitative research framework, leading into Part One, ‘Contextualising the Thesis’, which will address the following topics: narrative enquiry, using the documents of life, letters as a genre, diaries as narrative, the roles of memory and post-memory, the reflexive researcher. This methodology section closes with some cautionary observations. In the second part, the methods employed are considered in ‘Contextualising the fieldwork’. I will detail the processes involved in this part of my research. The section will address these subjects: initial preparation through background reading, accessing the material to be analysed, how the taxonomy of manliness was created, the process of reading and re-reading the diaries and letters, research ethics, the identification of specific research issues, and details of how the letters and diaries will be presented in the text throughout the thesis. This

methodology and methods chapter is designed to interweave with the theoretical underpinnings and driver of the thesis and to allow it to be presented as research with intellectual integrity. Finally, the chapter will be summarised.

3.2 “I”: reflexive researcher men doing research on men

When I was a much younger university lecturer still training in sociology, I had a conversation with one of my colleagues. He had considerably more teaching experience than I, and was seeking a chair in Political Sociology somewhere in England. This conversation centred on his belief that lecturing was stressful and that I was crazy even to think about teaching as a career. I had just left the RUC. By good luck I had not actually been killed, although I had had more than one close call, so my immediate reaction was to think that this man needed to reflect on what stress really was. It was only then that I realised that I needed to be more reflexive about both these situations, that each of us came from a different but valid perspective. This seemingly ordinary conversation started a journey for me that culminated in the conclusion that I needed to be aware of how my own perspective could influence and prejudice how I translated a situation and consequently the importance of engaging with research in a reflexive way. In essence, being reflexive refers to ‘a sensitivity to the researcher’s cultural, political and social context’ (Bryman 2004:500). More specifically, Haywood and Mac an Ghail posed two key research questions relevant to this research. The first is whether the patriarchal positioning of men precludes any ‘productive’ research being carried out on them, and the other is whether men can carry out gender research on other men (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003:108)?

It is useful to consider the fact that, as researchers, we involve ourselves in double hermeneutics, we write our texts about other texts – a process that can be susceptible to the perspective of the researcher and informed by how she/he is socially positioned vis-à-vis the research in respect of gender, class, race or religion (Mottier 2005: [16]). By being reflexive

researchers we can at least begin to recognise how we can exercise a two-fold influence on the dynamic of our research; not only do we analyse data from a certain vantage point, but our commentary on such analysis itself becomes, as Plummer puts it, ‘a constructor of knowledge’ (2005:206). Researchers find themselves in a reflexive symbiotic relationship with their research and this is, I believe, what Wright Mills (1959) was referring to when he said ‘The social scientist is not some autonomous being standing outside society, the question is where he stands within it’ (1959:204). He takes this further when he says, ‘Learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually to examine it and interpret it. In this sense craftsmanship (sic) is the centre of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product which you work’ (1959:216). The processes of reflexivity and *being* reflexive should therefore be understood as operating in the active voice, continually examining and revising the research position. Where research into men and masculinities is concerned Davison acknowledges the various ways in which the researcher is intimately connected to his research participants through the very object of investigation – hegemonic masculinity (2007:379).

The reflexive researcher is, I believe, a person best fitted to examine the environment in which their research is to take place, and to do so with great academic rigour, through a process of critical self-examination, research purpose, and conscious outcomes. I endorse what Plummer has to say about reflexivity in the research puzzle: ‘What reflexivity ultimately means to me is a much greater social and self awareness/consciousness of the whole intellectual/research process’ (2005:208). The methodological question is this: Does this matter in general and – more importantly – does this matter to the research? The answer to both these questions I would strongly argue is yes and I will use material from the data collected to illustrate my point.

The general point is made in the commentary above but specifically for this research I position myself in terms of my own masculinity as a white, heterosexual, middle class, professional sociologist who should on the face of it be aware of his masculinity arguably more so than other men. My professional and life experience tell me this is not always the case and the supposition that professional standing in an academic discipline as evolved and socially aware as sociology should be the bed rock of such awareness is sadly disproved. Perhaps this is where I sit in terms of this thesis; I expect awareness and insight from both me and others in terms of my and their masculinity but the reality is I feel otherwise. The thesis will argue masculinity is a nebulous concept that for some is core to their being however that is expressed, while for others it is more of a transient gender label that is neither core or fixed but more fluid in its performance. My reading of the soldiers' narratives has been a quest for insight into masculinity both in theoretical terms and in terms of the lived lives of men who fought a war over one hundred years ago and performed their manly scripts according to the prevailing hegemonic mores of the time. The prevailing masculinity script that I follow is not so clear cut and I must acknowledge that I do feel squeamish when I read a SAW diary entry or letter that appears to revel in the blood lust of killing Boers or which speaks of excitement of killing, of taking life. I must also acknowledge that the reading of this material has not as one might suspect desensitised me to war deaths but has made me more conscious of the current conflict in Afghanistan and the reporting on the news of soldiers' has had a strong emotional pull. This was especially poignant when I had just read the poem by Kipling 'The Young British Soldier' an excerpt is given below and had just heard on the news about five British soldiers shot dead in Afghanistan by an apparent 'rogue' police officer:

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
And the women come out to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.

Go, go, go like a soldier,
Go, go, go like a soldier,
Go, go, go like a soldier,
So-oldier *of* the Queen!

(From 'The Young British Soldier' by Rudyard Kipling)

This brought about a similar emotional reaction as I had felt while as a serving police officer in the RUC eleven officers were killed when Newry police station in County Down was mortar bombed. The quips of colleagues of, 'if you can't take a joke you shouldn't have joined' resonates with a gallows humour that that was predicated on presenting and performing manly toughness. I felt differently to my colleagues and from the example above relating to Afghanistan, to Newry, to the SAW I feel my masculinity, how I, in Judith Butler's terms, 'do gender', is shaped by such events and I recognise that in my research. I recognise the fact that I might view soldiers' narratives as adhering to a manly script that I personally found galling and in early drafts of the writing this was quite rightly pointed out and addressed.

I was connecting with the soldiers of the SAW in ways I had not ever thought would happen. Perhaps it is this emotional packaging of my own masculinity that drew me to using the sociology of emotion as part of my theoretical tool kit and perhaps my emotional response might have also influenced the interpretation and critical interrogation of the soldiers' narratives? I do believe however that being aware of these sensitivities has in fact strengthened the thesis and not weakened it. I also hope that striving to be reflexive and recognising the possible bias or possible prejudice I might inadvertently inject into the overall research process has also helped alleviate any possible deviation from the research objective.

3.3 The qualitative researcher and the narrative turn.

At its heart, the research is embedded in a qualitative narrative analysis of the writings of soldiers during a specific period of war and asks questions about the ways in which their masculinity comes to be embodied in their letters and diaries. The use of narrative analysis is appropriate for this research, in that it proves the most relevant method to elicit the richest data from what is in essence the textual representation of individual soldiers' thoughts (Bryman 2004). Although qualitative analysis can be viewed as using multi methods (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:3), it can also be:

more usefully conceptualised as a form of *bricolage*: a putting-together of a set of research practices that aim to provide a solution to a concrete problem. In other words, the choice of qualitative research techniques depends on the research question that is being asked: it is problem-driven rather than method-driven.

(Mottier 2005: [2]).

For Mottier the 'interpretive turn' developed within qualitative analysis in the last three decades sees the social world as, 'subjectively lived construct' which including hermeneutics and dramaturgical analysis, has not only allowed research to interrogate the social phenomena as social constructs, but also to place the research in a reflexive context (2005:[8]). The fabric of this research is strengthened by broadly adopting the 'interpretive turn' because it 'leads us to recognize the cultural and historical situatedness of constructions of meaning by social agents, and the interpretations that researchers develop of them' (Mottier 2005: [18]). The soldiers' diaries and letters that are core to this research are situated in the nineteenth century with its socio-cultural meanings and attachments relating to manliness and as a reflexive researcher I am aware of my subjectivity in the research process and its relevance to the dynamic of the investigation.

According to Riessman (2008) although opinion varies it was really from the mid 1980's onward there has been a substantive 'narrative turn' in research which has become firmly anchored in the social sciences (Plummer 2005:11), after which it has spread across a broad span of disciplines (Roberts 2002:132). The 'narrative turn' challenged the then research orthodoxy of realism and positivism where for example narratives would be analysed as a source of data without any recognition of the subtle nuances of who the narrative was taken from, when, why, where and even the position of the researcher themselves. Sociologists including Plummer and Stanley see the narrative turn as a source of greater understanding of life stories and the interaction of life history and biography with the social world (Stanley 1995). Narratives are not static nor are they expressive of any one representation. Instead, they can be defined as being 'linked with time as a fundamental aspect of social action. It is held that we experience life through conceptions of the past, present and future and these provide organization for our actions and experiences' (Roberts 2002:177). Put in simple terms, narratives are the telling or retelling of a story and that story can be a life story or an event or a combination of both. Bryman summarises narrative analysis as 'an approach to the analysis of qualitative data that emphasises the stories that people employ to account for events' (2004:413).

By embracing the 'narrative turn', we can engage with life experience in a more humanistic and meaningful way (Roberts 2002, Plummer 2005). This research utilises the broad objective of narrative analysis to allow 'the careful listening and reading of the words and stories of the teller' (Roberts 2002:133). It is primarily designed not only to draw from the soldiers' writings of how they tell *their* story of the SAW, but to analyse their writings thematically in terms of their masculinity (Reissman 2008). A central feature of this research was my decision to situate the soldiers' writings within the broad approach of thematic narrative analysis as a method of examining historical sources. I follow very similar lines as

described by Reissman (2008: 63-67) in describing thematic analysis as a process which is 'careful and methodical' but in essence involves an initial 'biographical reading' of the subjects socio-historical situatedness through a thorough immersion in relevant theory both of which act as a platform with which to interrogate the narratives. I broadly followed this format in the context of this research but I adapted thematic analysis to be the following. I too started the process by immersion in the socio-historical context of the SAW what Reissman calls biographical reading and a further reading of the theoretical texts on masculinity relevant to the research. From these theoretical and historical readings I created a 'Taxonomy' (see section 3.8) that I determined would detail essential elements of masculinity and manliness of the Victorian soldier around the SAW. I then used this taxonomy to interrogate the letters and diaries initially reading them at a surface level then subsequently reading them again a number of times; through this method I was able to create a symbiotic process between the taxonomy and the soldiers' narratives. I looked closely for example at the language used by the soldiers to consider how that conveyed ideological and emotional context of their masculinity. In particular I was conscious of the tension between the perceived demands of hegemonic masculinity and individual agency in the soldiers' writings. This then allowed me to refine the taxonomy into the emergent themes that are the core of the empirical data chapters. Most of the original taxonomy was not in fact relevant to the narratives examined, and this will be addressed later in this chapter, but the emergent themes that evolved from it certainly were.

By following this process of locating the soldiers' letters and diaries in their own socio-political context, they can then be regarded as a substantial narrative. As Stanley and Dampier observe, researchers should always be aware of treating 'twentieth century practices as a prism through which to interpret... previous centuries' (2005:91). However, this serves merely as a methodological warning shot and should not reduce the major advantages that a

properly conducted thematic narrative analysis of archive material can achieve (Riessman 2008:53-76). The research for this thesis involves an interpretive process grounded in an awareness of what Ricoeur describes as 'lived experience', where narrative is a composite threefold process or threefold present of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration (1990:53,65). Soldiers' narratives can, therefore, be seen as mediation between what they experience, how they record that experience, and how I as a researcher interpret it. For Ricoeur, the relationship between history and how it is understood to be 'real' is an important element in interpreting historical narratives (1990:5). Using the soldiers' letters and diaries allowed me to investigate hermeneutically what is in effect an autobiographical insight into several questions. Who was the writer, what were his personal thoughts about the issues? And what were the historical and socio-cultural contexts of the authors and their writings? These are all key questions that will be addressed as this chapter develops and the broader thesis progresses.

I intend to focus on Plummer's (2005) description of diaries and letters as the 'documents of life' and to let myself be guided by his principle that life documents can be an extremely important tool for research. Yuill (2007:[2]) suggests that documents such as diaries should not be 'regarded as static entities but rather bound into the social world, capable of interweaving a variety of social, personal, official and unofficial biographies and narratives'. I have borrowed from Thomas and Znaniecki's (1958) groundbreaking study of Polish peasantry (1918-1920), where life history in the form of autobiographical accounts is perceived, alongside diaries and letters, to constitute the 'perfect type of sociological material'. The soldiers' accounts of the SAW give a rich and personal perspective of their journey into war, one that offers the researcher both challenge and opportunity to understand their vision of manliness.

3.4 Using the documents of life: Letters

The writing of letters has a long history as a means by which human beings have communicated with each other. From early recorded times, the letter has been an important artefact in the conduct of human life. Letter writing was once the domain of the better educated – those in holy orders or the upper echelons of the social hierarchy¹⁸. Stanley (2002:207) gives a detailed definition of a letter:

Fundamentally, a letter is a material document of some kind (paper, words on a screen or taking other forms) that signals its epistolary purpose through its form or structure by being addressed to one person and signed by another (Dear A, Yours Z'), although neither the signatory (or writer) nor the addressee (or reader) need necessarily be singular. A letter originates from an 'I' (or a number of them) who signs the letter and in doing so guarantees its authenticity in the sense of the writer being the source of this epistolary document. A letter then, is that which signals an 'epistolary intent', and the epistolary or letter form can be easily recognised and distinguished from other forms of writing, because of existing in a social context with shared and largely stable conventions governing its form

Of note from the letters that I use the addressee was in the main 'To mother' to the extent that I toyed with the idea of including the expression 'Letters to mother' in the main title of the thesis. It was the custom at the time that many letters would then be circulated around the family circle (Gilbert narratives undated:7). In the nineteenth century, the advancement of basic literacy skills through an improved and greatly expanded education system resulted in a large increase in the numbers of ordinary citizens who could read and write. The result was that, when 'Tommy Atkins' took up arms in the SAW he had the skills and education to emulate the officer class in writing letters home. Indeed, by end of the war in 1902 the SAW soldiers had received some seventy million letters and newspapers from home; the number of

¹⁸ See Roberts (2002) 'Biographical Research' for an excellent introduction to the use of both letters and diaries in auto/biographical work. Liz Stanley's 'The Epistolarium': On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences (2004) also stands out as an important work.

letters sent by them in response can be estimated to have been in the tens of millions (Boyden 1990:24, 25). The sending and receipt of letters was very important for ‘Tommy’ and the Australian Trooper F.H. Farley records:¹⁹

I got four letters 12 papers and some Xmas lollies. The guns have just been doing a bit of practice we could see a few Boers when we first got here and suppose they shelled them, I was too busy reading [letters] to look at what they were firing at.

Plummer has argued that ‘many insights can be gained from letters’ although he goes on to qualify this by saying that ‘letters are not accurate enough to be of analytic interest – they contain too much material that strays from the researcher’s concern’ (2005:54-55). I strongly disagree with Plummer and reject the suggestion that letters are a weak material source for analysis. Stanley too challenges Plummer’s disavowals of letter analysis and argues for example that letters are more than a one way communication but ‘part of an exchange that is reciprocal and follows the rules of turn taking and reciprocity’(2004:202-203). The soldiers in writing their letters are entering into a communication process between writer and recipient, very often son to mother, and this dialogue provides an important vehicle at times for soldiers to express their more intimate thoughts. Instead of researchers encountering methodological problems as Plummer suggests, the analysis of letters using the device of thematic narrative, offers an opportunity to gain insight into many facets of the sender-recipient-socio-historical relationship. Letters are not only personal interactions between sender and reader but are positioned in time and are contiguous with the socio-historical setting and therefore offer historians and others an incredible research resource.

This is not to say that using letters in research is problem free: there is arguably a limiting dimension to letters in respect of their ‘truth value’. However Jolly and Stanley (2005:76) contend that the truth content or status of a letter is more complex and depends as much on the playing out of the relationship between sender and recipient. Put more

¹⁹ 12th January 1900, diary entry PRO 00775.

succinctly, ‘In other words the “truth” of the writing is in the relationship rather than in its subject’ (Jolly and Stanley 2005:2). I would argue that at a very basic level the SAW soldier would endeavour to be genuine to his mother or family or to whomever the letter was sent to. They might try and disguise their true emotional feelings or at other times use the letter to express their manliness but in essence it is the relationship that is at the core of the correspondence that prevails. For Stanley, letters are ‘real in their consequences’ and studying them requires ‘an analytical approach that is fully responsive to the epistemological, conceptual and theoretical issues’ (2004:212).

This research is deeply rooted in the dramaturgical, and where letters are concerned I believe they can ‘involve a performance of self by the writer, but one tempered by recognizing that the addressee is not just a mute audience for this, but also a (writing) self in waiting’ (Stanley 2004:212). Letters, therefore, are social artefacts imbued with much more than an exchange of information. They can also be conduits to emotional states of mind in which the writer exposes himself and his innermost emotional self. This is not just a characteristic peculiar to letters; the diary, the memoir and other genres of biographical and autobiographical writing share many similar qualities. The following sub-section addresses some of these nuances.

3.5 Using the documents of life: Diaries

The keeping of a diary²⁰ is for many a natural every day event. Today, the advent of social networking sites has led to a situation in which hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of people worldwide update their electronic diary or their blog on a site like Facebook or Twitter. This is more than just cataloguing their schedule: it is the sharing of their lives with chosen others (Antheunis et al. 2010). Online diary writing is a very open and public way to present ‘lives as lived’ on a day-to-day basis. For the purposes of this research,

²⁰ For a very complete review of the ‘diary’ in a socio-historic sense see Symes, C. (1999) *Chronicles of Labour: a discourse analysis of diaries* *Time & Society*, 8 (2); 357.

the diaries I cite are perforce non-electronic. Each one is a ‘document created by an individual who has maintained a regular, personal and contemporaneous record’ (Alaszewski 2006:1). They are characterized by regularity that is in recording sequenced events they are personally identifiable as the author’s contemporaneously written record (Alaszewski 2006:2). The diary can therefore be perceived as an authentic record of a real self writing in a ‘living moment’ (Paperno 2004:565). Although Paperno goes on to argue that ‘it is a common opinion that, ‘scholars do not know what to *do* with diaries’ (Paperno 2004:565: original emphasis). I would argue her opinion is the complete antithesis to this and similar research which has already proved the value of the sociological interrogation of diaries.

For the soldiers of the SAW, it was sometimes described as a pocket note book and/or diary. From the 1880’s onwards, diaries were being sold as a popular item that would appeal to the gentlemen of the British Empire, a tradition that continued right up to the 1960’s, when some diaries explicitly contained extra editorial features that touched on ‘more obviously “mannish” matters such as motoring, wine, sports and commerce’ (Symes 1999:365). Roberts (2002:63), suggests in the latter half of the twentieth century ‘the publication of diaries has become something of a vogue’ even though the writing of diaries had had a very long history before that (Symes 1999:359-360, Alaszewski 2006,). The SAW was no exception to this, British soldiers committed their thoughts to their diaries before they went to South Africa and after they got there. They recorded their lived experiences, throughout their service, in battle, sieges and during the scorched earth guerrilla campaign. Their diary recordings can be examined in terms of social function, in cases where writers changed from one situation to another.

For the SAW soldier it was ultimately a recording and ordering of emotional experience (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: 421) and also a means of ‘exploring and confirming the sense of what we are – an affirmation of our existence or being’ (Roberts

2002:64). Although traditionally the use of diaries within sociology has been restricted, the current ‘narrative turn’ (Plummer 2005:11) has led to the emergence of sociological interest and embrace. This embrace has shifted from Franzosi’s call for sociologists to ‘be interested in narrative’ (1998:517) to the now growing level of sociological literature on the topic, presently highlighted by feminist scholars such as Jolly and Stanley (2005).

Diary writers conform to and write within a context of intertextuality where they ‘borrow, recycle, and echo various culturally recognized modes of speaking’ (Jokinen 2004:351). There is also at times a playing out of ‘master narratives’ (Jokinen 2004:352), in the present case I present masculinity and manliness in this guise. At times there can be interplay between what the writers are saying and the social demands that act on them; this appears to be counter intuitive and can call into question the authenticity of what is being said. The authenticity of a diary is a key issue: I will address it in detail later in this chapter, when the methods employed for this research are closely examined. Prior (2003:14) comments on the way diaries are created and identified for research purposes, ‘the recruitment of documents, as with the recruitment of soldiers, is not always dependent on a fitness test.’ Diaries can be edited or otherwise adulterated, for example, and that can seriously corrupt the research process. Prior gives the example of the classic diary of Anne Frank, detailing the numerous editing processes (other than by Frank herself) to which it was subjected before being presented as the finished diary. Referring to her project²¹ to analyse the letters of Olive Schreiner, Stanley details a similar process taking place. Some of the diaries accessed for this research had been transcribed post conflict by relatives, which does leave them open to editing in order to ‘present’ a specific image of a beloved relative. I was very aware of this and the majority of the diaries were accessed in their original form directly from the archives.

²¹ See <http://www.oliveschreinerletters.ed.ac.uk/> for detailed information on the Olive Schreiner project and supportive information on researching diaries and letters.

3.6 The Roles of memory and post memory

The consideration of memory and post memory is crucially important in the context of narrative analysis. This is particularly true in the case of diaries. Let me illustrate this with an example from one of my own research diaries before examining further the literature of memory and post memory.

Corporal Frederick Hammond Farley is a diarist from my Australian soldiers' contingent (full details will be given in the section on Contextualising Fieldwork). Not only does he have extremely clear handwriting (a boon to the researcher), he also appears to have re-edited his own diary as a much older man, many decades after the SAW had finished. As a prelude to giving an example of post memory I will establish how the date of the diary is re-edited with addendum. He initially writes on August 28th 1900, 'Went into town today bought myself a map' the diary then has a dated addendum just after the full stop and, in much smaller and more cramped handwriting: 'I still have it 23-5-1950'. This places the addendum some five decades after the original event. There is a further example of a retrospective addition later when; in his diary entry for 2 September 1900 he refers to a sermon by an army minister of religion: 'The minister says the war will be over in a week or so.' The addendum immediately follows in similar style: 'The fool!' The diary is peppered with such examples, but I will give one more to demonstrate, the provenance of the addendum is not clear this time but could be assumed to be in the same time frame as the previous example. The original diary date is 12 July 1900: 'Still camped out at Bethlehem Jimmy Lemon & I got arrested last night for trying to get some wood out of the roof of a barn but was let off, took a...'. The addenda appear initially between the following words: 'Bethlehem^Jimmy Lemon & I^ got arrested'. The end of the line is marked with a cross (X) and at the bottom of the page under the last line in smaller writing is another cross followed by the words 'We went back later [and] got our wood, Jimmy [and] I. FHF'. He signed his initials after this addendum but there

is no date. These are good examples of retrospective post memory, of revisiting and reconfiguring events after it has taken place. Michael Roper's (2000:183) in-depth treatment of one soldier's versions of his experience as an officer in World War One is also very telling in showing how the memory of events is constantly shaded by the need to address the fact that 'remembering always entails the working of past experience with available cultural scripts'. In the case he refers to, Roper works through this soldier's need to be part of the narrative of soldier heroism against the reality of his war-time experience in battle, which was not heroic. The post memory negotiation of his combat experience causes him as much anxiety as the stress and trauma that he originally experienced just prior to a battle. There is also a suggestion that we need to look beyond public narratives of soldier heroes to 'the nature of the unconscious conflicts which find expression in individual war memory' (Roper 2000:199). That is a sentiment endorsed by this research and this researcher. I will now consider memory and post memory and their relationship with the question of narratives of the SAW.

The question for this research is, given the anxieties surrounding memory for example, is it an accurate recall of events? The time lapse between soldiers taking part in action and writing in their diaries and letters could be immediate or alternatively days. How would these time lapses affect their recording of their engagements and encounters, for those soldiers with a longer timeframe before writing, was there time to reconfigure and re-interpret events? Memory is a central human condition that flows constantly creating and recreating the essence we perceive to be the real 'us'. As Roberts (2002:140) points out, memories can be communicated 'between individuals and groups' and this can multiply the number of confounding variables it can generate and as a methodological concern it is 'a much more problematic idea' (Plummer 2005:233). Plummer (2005:234). further suggests, memory can have its downside : once composed, a story can become 'freeze dried text'; 'memory may

reify the life into something it is not'. The researcher has to a certain extent accept and recognise these limitations, and like Roberts (2002:147,148) acknowledge there will always be key methodological challenges with regard to memory. As a researcher passionately involved in researching narratives through the medium of diaries, I was disappointed in my own research naïveté and had accepted the version of the diary in my possession as the unembellished truth. Perhaps when I look back at this work I will argue that in fact I did know of the diary's editorial weaknesses, but was merely planning to invite readers of this thesis to make up their own minds – an unwarranted exercise of faith in the diary writer's memory. It is, perhaps, by engaging in a reflexive research process that such sensitivities can be properly addressed, and it is to the subject of the researcher engaging in reflection that we will now turn.

In reviewing the above section on methodology, certain salient factors emerge. These include the ways in which the narrative turn in the social sciences has – with all its caveats– has I would argue been a turn in a progressive direction. Using the documents of life and engaging with them in a constructive and considered methodological manner, paying attention to issues around questions of truth alongside the roles of memory and post-memory can reinvigorate narrative analysis through a reflexive approach and significantly enhance the whole research process. Having reviewed what I consider to be the fundamental methodological considerations, the chapter now considers the fuel of the research – fieldwork data.

3.7 Contextualising the Fieldwork Methods: Desperately seeking the South African War

The rest of this chapter follows the journey on which I embarked, to track down, capture and analyse the narratives of SAW soldiers. This has been a journey like many research journeys: a heady mix of frustration, reward, pain and pleasure. It started off from an

embryonic idea generated by Professor Liz Stanley, then of Newcastle University, and was subsequently developed by the present writer into this thesis. One of the first important components of the research was to recognise and reframe the Second Boer War as the South African War, in order to overcome its racial and imperial overtones. For example use of the words South African War embraces the fact that the war included more than just the Boers but all Africans of that region both black and white. After that, I could see that the research was going to entail sourcing diaries and letters from all those ranks that served in South Africa, including soldiers from the British colonies. Having done that, I would be in a position to attempt to analyse the inscription of masculinity in the materials I collected. Thirdly as I saw the matter then, I urgently needed to see an SAW diary or letter so I could get a feel for the research and make my first indirect contact with soldiers. Having been told to formulate some form of archival strategy as Hill (1993) suggests, I put that on the back burner and dashed off to the Tyne and Wear Archives Service (TWAS) in Newcastle city centre to obtain my first original document. I ‘met’ my first soldier, Gunner J.R. Archibald of Elswick Battery Newcastle, in the form of his archived letter²². This was my initiation into the world of archival research. It was impulsive and clumsy, but it did yield my first SAW document, a letter written by Gunner Archibald, who obligingly wrote that he and his comrades had left Newcastle Central Station to go to the SAW, ‘taking the sad partings *like men*’ [my emphasis]. I had found masculinity in the SAW almost immediately and for many minutes I read and reread the entry then had the letter photocopied to take home. This was a start, the beginning of my endeavour to make sense of war and masculinity. I was pretty pleased with my good luck at finding Gunner Archibald, little knowing that my journey was to turn out to be a sustained campaign that would last six years, and that I would face many research battles in the future. I had succumbed to the temptations adumbrated by Fitzgerald

²² See Fig. (iv.) page 76.

(2005) when she portrays the archive as seductive. I felt I now understood what she meant when she wrote 'In reading this material I am inextricably linked with the writers in my attempts to transit their memories' (Fitzgerald 2005:659).

Gathering evidence the raw data – the soldier speaks

I will now review the gathering of research materials and the methods involved in doing the fieldwork; in so doing I will also critique their use. As I have mentioned previously, my first sortie to an archive was to the TWAS. After that, however, a more realistic action plan was developed following the guidelines suggested by Hill (1993). For this process, I endeavoured to adopt the wariness and sensitivity to archival research that Goffman considers in terms of his methods, including the presentation of the self as a researcher. In this context, I acknowledged the intricate interactions that take place between the researcher and the archive. Of course, the archive itself is a system of record staffed by people who themselves adopt Goffmanesque coping strategies (Hill1993:6). In the first instance, I identified my archive targets as Hill (1993:27-36) suggests. I had a slight advantage here as I was aware of the archived diaries and letters collection at the National Army Museum (NAM) in Chelsea, London. Without the advantage of the archive at NAM the research would have been quite tortuous as general archives hold limited resources from the South African War. In advance of my first visit, I liaised with NAM through their web site, explaining the research purpose of my visit and what I would ideally like to examine. This strategy worked well. NAM provided excellent support both before and during my visit, and extended this to future visits. To a large degree, I was able to establish by email the scale of the collection but not its full scope. More importantly, I established contact with a member of staff who was extremely helpful throughout my time before, during and after my fieldwork at NAM. The archival tool kit that Hill (1993:29) suggests is a standard literature review. I had carried one out and created a master bibliography to guide the research.

Through email correspondence with the NAM I was able to obtain a NAM CABAL Data Record Concise Report which comprised some sixty-three pages containing nearly seven hundred separate entries relating to the SAW. This was a major bonus. With it in hand, I trawled through the records, identifying those I considered likely to be of the greatest research value, and it was at this point that I recognised that my quest to access material would be more challenging than I had originally believed. I had marked with a red dot all the artefacts I wanted to see. It was not long before I realised that I was selecting every entry: an army of red dots now sat neatly regimented on pages and pages of the NAM records. The reality of archival research started to hit home and I realised two main research truths: firstly it was impossible to look at all the records in the time allotted for my fieldwork, and secondly I realised that the travel and subsistence costs of visiting London would make it impossible to stay long enough to allow access to all the archived materials in the NAM. This was even before I had developed a method for recording material from diaries and letters or clearly defined what I was going to record.

Prior to visiting the National Army Museum, I went to my local Records Office with Professor Stanley. Although we had made an appointment for our visit, we still had to negotiate a rather tortuous route into the archives; this resembled the procedures one has to pass through when visiting a prison. The whole process was very similar to Goffman's account of another archive and its sensitivities (Hill 1993:6); in that case, even the dress worn by staff bore a great resemblance to that of a laboratory technician. Things were not improved when, both having accessed some material, we shared a desk to look at a single piece

Fig iv. Gunner John Archibald - Partings like men

2

himself up to the mark, everything that could be desired was there, and the Regimental Band under the conductorship of Mr Harry Smith played selections of music during the ~~of~~ supper.

We had been under orders a day or two before to proceed to Aldershot for a week or two to receive instructions in Gunnery, Field-Movements etc, but the Gunners did not need much instruction as they were pretty well up in Gunnery, and a large proportion of the drivers had been at the game before.

We left dear old Newcastle on ~~the~~ ~~Thursday~~ ~~of~~ Pancake Tuesday as we bitherness all it in three special troop trains, and many sad farewells took place that day on the platforms of the Central Station between Fathers Mothers Wives and Sweethearts ~~of~~ and the men of the Battery. But the ~~of~~ Artillerymen bore the sad partings like men.

The first train left Newcastle at about 10³⁰ am carrying away the guns and waggons and about fifty men in charge of Capt Wedd.

she left the platform the ovation

TYPE FOR NOTE

together. One of us was immediately told to move: the archive rules stipulated that only one person might occupy a desk to read one item. This was a raw initiation into archive work and a steep learning curve for me as a fledgling researcher. One positive result that came from these initial experiences was my understanding of the need to develop 'harvesting systems'. The research method that emerged from this was a taxonomy of masculinity, specifically created to gather material from the SAW soldiers' narratives. I will feature that process in section 3.8 of this chapter. One other very important issue to emerge from this sortie into the local archives was the increasing realisation that the time I actually had to spend in archives would play a crucial part in the research process. Liz Stanley's advice was to adopt an 'extreme archiving' *modus operandi* where every second of opportunity to be in an archive would be vigorously exploited.

I went on to review the process of archive fieldwork as a whole and finally adopted an investigative strategy which in practice meant that I would select the records I felt were best fitted to the research. I was aware that the selection of letter and diary material in the research process could be problematic and for Prior the way in which letters for example come to be identified as suitable and are chosen to be worked on leads to a sometimes methodologically compromising position where randomness and representativeness are supplanted by potentially biased sampling (2003:150-153). That concern is also shared by this research in that I was selecting letters on a non random basis which by its very nature had an impact on what material was chosen for interrogation that is I was choosing material by virtue of its availability and accessibility. In the end the sampling became more a case of expediency and what was being made available and could actually be accessed in the time I had to execute the fieldwork. I fully recognise that this was not an ideal situation but one I had to work with and although this could have been a confounding factor in reality the quality of the data retrieved I argue was not adversely affected.

In practical terms I would then book the diaries and letters in advance of my first visit to the archive in question. By doing this I saved myself an enormous amount of time. This was helpful as the Templer Study Centre holding the NAM archives was then only open Thursday, Friday and every third Saturday. Had I not pre booked material I would have had to select the material in the archive which would require a search of the archive indexes. Then the material would have to be ordered and would sit a queuing system while it was retrieved from the repository where it was stored and this could take many valuable minutes. This was not as random as at first it may appear, the NAM record did have a little amount of information that at least allowed me to identify an entry as a diary, a letter or something else. In some cases, I was able to link entries to specific events such as Ladysmith. For my first and indeed subsequent visits, I e-mailed my request from the catalogue and after negotiating entry into NAM's Templer Study Centre, I collected the diaries and letters I had ordered in advance, along with yellow lined note paper (designed for writing in the pencil that was the only writing instrument allowed). I finally sat down and considered the bundles of documents in front of me. What struck me immediately was that, although I had ordered a particular accession number from the archive for a diary or even a bundle of four diaries, the archive list did not show their actual length – a detail that would impact on the time needed to read and re-read them and make notes. This was a variable that I had not previously contemplated, and one which meant readjustment to my archive strategy. The result of my first of three, three-day visits (this was finally determined by the financial expense) was that, if I determined to consider visiting other potentially fruitful archives, my research net would need to be cast more widely, and in a way that did not incur undue financial strain. In the Templer Study Room, I was forced to reach some very hard decisions, as follows:

- 1. NAM diary/letter material was to be transcribed by hand using the taxonomy and if it proved quicker by voice recording (see section 3.8 for details on the taxonomy)

- 2. The NAM materials would have to be declared useful or not useful, and, if not useful, abandoned.
- 3. Access to the Public Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI)²³ and any other archive would follow the same protocol as established for the NAM.
- 4. Other sources incurring little or no financial commitment would need to be identified.

Addressing the first point using the taxonomy created for the research proved invaluable, but not infallible. It gave me some indication of what to look for in the narratives, but they still had to be read through at least twice before field notes were compiled: this was a time-consuming process. I tried using a voice recorder in order to make better use of my time in the Study Room and transcribing later on my return home. That worked quite well until someone complained about me speaking into the recording device even though at times the study room could be quite noisy; consequently, I was given a desk removed slightly from the main room. This might have worked but I became so conscious of not making too loud a noise that some of my recordings are muffled and indecipherable. Some of the collections were so big that to concentrate on one particular set would mean less time to spend on other possibly rich material. Therefore, if my initial assessment of any item judged it redundant, I did not follow it slavishly, but dropped it there and then. For example, many diaries and letters were of the 'got up, went out, came back, went to sleep' variety; although these gave details of daily activity, they were far removed from my main focus of war and masculinity.

This same protocol was adhered to in PRONI, where it eventually worked successfully. However such are the vagaries of research my first pre planned visit to the records office in Belfast was going very well with access to letters and diaries finalised in advance following on from my NAM experience. But all to no avail as public service workers

²³ The archives at PRONI were chosen for a number of reasons, first of all I was aware of potentially rich material from previous visits not connected with this particular research and secondly I had family in Belfast that would provide accommodation and not incur costs.

decided to go on strike. It was a lesson learned but not one I had really anticipated. However when I did finally access the archives staff at PRONI were incredibly helpful and the archive research productive.

Finally, other cost-effective sources of material were located: one was made up of diaries that I requested from the Australian War Memorial (AWM). This proved successful, since photocopying charges, archive staff time, and postage from Australia were economically applied, making a visit unnecessary (though nonetheless desirable). The drawbacks here were that, although most of the copies were good some were faint and not quite legible, but they still had to be read through to ensure that they were indeed not usable. This was incredibly time consuming and at times very frustrating but it had to be done.

On one of my many web searches I came across the Canadian Letters and Images Project (CLIP) which is a quite exceptional web-accessible resource²⁴. In effect, it contains letters and diary entries made by Canadian troops from a range of conflicts, including the SAW; these can be downloaded through the web. I liaised with the lead academic for CLIP Dr. Stephen Davies of Vancouver Island University and clarified copyright use. This is an impressive project and one that I readily acknowledge as invaluable for this thesis.

I also sent a letter to the Nostalgia section of my local newspaper the *Hartlepool Mail* in which I asked readers for any material from the SAW. My initiative was rewarded with a visit from someone local who brought me a hand-written transcript of his grandfather's SAW diary. Other published volumes of diaries and letters from the SAW came to me as Christmas, birthday and other gifts, and the collection grew. I searched the web sites associated with various regiments, and was lucky enough to gain resources from The Green Howards. I also wrote to Tameside Archives in Greater Manchester and paid for some photocopied letters and photographs. I bought a CD from an internet selling site containing

²⁴ <http://www.canadianletters.ca/>

some two thousand five hundred photographic images of the SAW, but fewer than twenty turned out to be useful for this research.

The logistics of the research are considerable: some forty-seven diaries and four hundred and seventy three letters were consulted from the various archives, although not all of them have been included in the thesis itself. The material that was discarded and not used was either too illegible or did not contain any useful data. Many simply contained date and time of events with no additional commentary to analyse, one soldier simply recorded his lack of letters from home, and his diary simply said the same thing each day, 'no letter from home' until the entry 'letter arrived today'. Due to time constraints it was not possible to give a completely accurate account of the length of each diary or its individual word count but as examples I detail here three different types to give a flavour of the volume of the diaries. These diaries illustrate the differing type of diary encountered:

1. Trooper CW Turner produced a diary of some 103 pages approximating to some 26 000 words.
2. Private H.E. Facer produced a diary of some thirty one pages and approximately 10 000 words again easily read.
3. Lieutenant R. Gartside produced two diaries that when photocopied from the original and sent over from Australia were very difficult and at times impossible to read but interestingly the copies contained a photocopy of the diary complete with bullet (see Fig v. Page 86). The diary was reported as having saved his life by stopping the bullet. The diaries combined total was approximately one hundred and seventy pages and impossible to estimate the words contained; this highlights the difficulty in accurately ascertaining the total volume of words in the letters and diaries.

4. A commercially published volume of Trooper H.G. Gilbert from New Zealand approximating to some one hundred and forty pages with approximately twenty thousand words in the form of written letters.

Counting the words in letters was not even contemplated but would at an educated guess run into the many thousands. However, the process of determining the war and masculinity nexus reduced their numbers considerably, creating a substantial number of research casualties and this process of elimination by natural selection of legibility helped determine the data to be considered for analysis. Central to the process of archival retrieval was the creation of a taxonomy of masculinity, and the following section now considers that.

3.8 The taxonomy of war and masculinity:

The creation of a taxonomy of masculinity and the SAW came from the need to have a practical system that would help to make sense of the narratives being analysed. This served as the research analytical tool. As referred to above part of the tool kit for this research was the preparative pre-reading for the archive work. For the second part of the tool kit I needed to create what I describe as a taxonomy of war and masculinity. To be more precise, I had to construct a taxonomy for masculinity and the SAW. This was done after I consulted a broad range of material with the purpose of gaining an insight into the SAW soldier and his masculinity or, more appropriately, his manliness (this is detailed extensively in Chapter Four). In brief, the taxonomy was predicated on the idea that, for the SAW soldier, the contours of masculinity and manliness were socially constructed within a hegemonic framework (Connell 1987, Donaldson 1993; Kimmel 2000). This framework emerged out of a socio-cultural milieu dominated by masculine scripts including emotional restraint; hyper-masculine aggression and violence (Scheff 2006); heterosexuality Brittan (1989); racism, a sense of racial superiority, and class superiority (Beynon 2002). From this process, a list of the defining characteristics of masculinity as manliness was drawn up and tentatively applied

to the letters and diaries from the CLIP. The initial list containing twenty six categories which were coded 1-26. For example any material I deemed to be demonstrating stoicism I coded with the number 6 or bravery with the coding number 3 (see appendices 2 and 3 for the original taxonomy and example of a coded letter). This provided a working framework that allowed the gathering of material relative to expressions of manliness in the letters and diaries. Certain dominant themes began to emerge from the narratives; this allowed the taxonomy to be adjusted in response to the soldiers' own focus and definition of manly behaviour. The final taxonomy read as follows:

Masculinity/manliness in the SAW, Manliness as:

- Manly image including class image, body image, racial image, gender image
- Patriotism
- Bravery/heroism
- Camaraderie/homosociality
- Lust for fighting
- Honour
- Stoicism

This reconfigured taxonomy I renamed as the research 'themes' which were then used as the central research tool with which to critically interpret the soldiers' narratives. This was done for both diaries and letters, and the procedure gave structure to the analysis and a solid point of reference. This process also allowed me to get a real sense of how frequently the themes were being referred to and at a deeper level their emotional content which is addressed later in the data chapters. The frequency in fact varied enormously from soldier to soldier but the taxonomy and the emergent themes were central to better understanding the masculinity war nexus. The physical process of reading the diaries and letters is now briefly commented on.

3.9 Reading letters and diaries

The practicalities of reading and presenting letters and diaries

An important part of this research process was the physical reading of the narratives involved. Given that the scrutiny of each diary page, each line of a letter can be seriously hampered by either indecipherable writing or poor photocopy quality, access to highly legible handwriting is crucially important. With those diaries and letters that had been photocopied for me or which already existed in photocopy form, the task involved not a small measure of patience! For this I made use of visual aids such as magnifying glasses and an A4-size magnifying plastic pane, both aided by a powerful light source such as an angle poise lamp. Use was made of all these items to read very difficult writing, whether the handwriting was hard to decipher or the copy was of poor quality, one even had a bullet hole in it. Even with the addition of a magnifying glass with an in-built light designed to illuminate passages and lines, it was still often hard to make sense of the script. With time constraints in mind, if a diary or letter appeared too hard to read during an initial read-through, a decision was made at once to abandon it; this meant that more time could be spent on more legible pieces, even where it took time to read them, albeit painstakingly. The other technique I used with hard-to-read photocopied pieces was to use a highlighter pen, trying out various colours to see if the text became any clearer. Sometimes the process worked, often it did not, but all of the above techniques were at least attempted before a piece was finally abandoned.

Throughout the presentation of diary and letter material, I have presented a verbatim quotation from the actual text. I have made no attempt to correct grammar or spelling or any other textual aberration using for example ‘sic’ or other grammatical intervention only when absolutely necessary to make the text readable. I hope this means that the authenticity of the text has been given its rightful pride of place in the excerpts I have used. Any clarification that needs to be included in a quotation will be placed in parentheses thus [...], and at times

for brevity some quotes are broken up and shortened with the designation ‘...’ signifying continuity. Diary entries and letters are dated as the sender dated them, but if no date can be seen or is unreadable, the abbreviation ‘n.d.’ will be used to signify ‘no date’. Photographs have been difficult to source since they have in the main been taken off a commercially purchased compact disc, but where possible they will be fully identified.

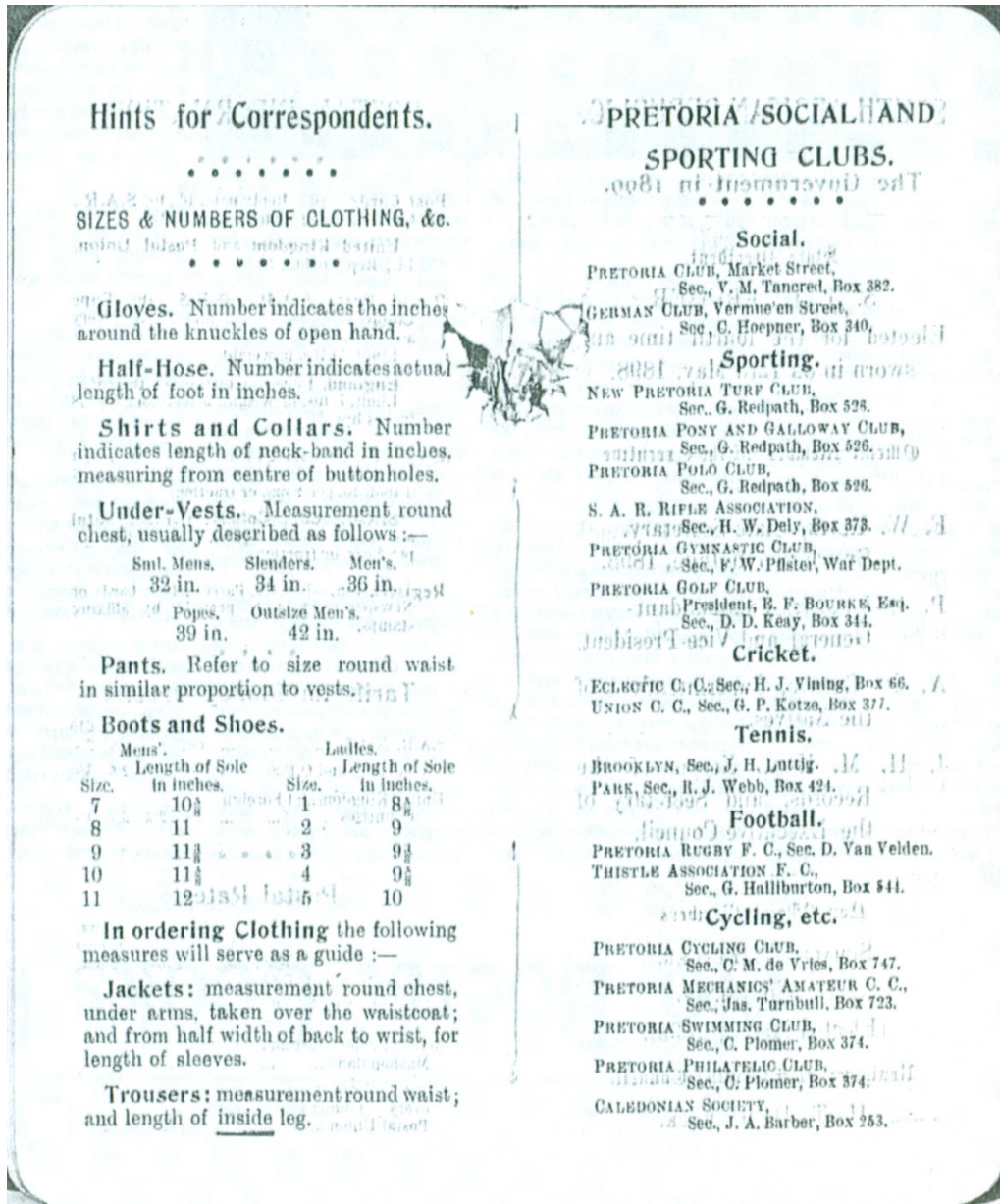
Some concluding remarks relating to soldiers narratives

By using both letter and diary material the research was enriched for a number of reasons. The inscription of the soldiers masculinity was accessed from both sets of sources although it was noticeable for example that letters rarely, if ever, detailed the sometimes monotonous routine of daily life recorded in some diaries which covered only time of waking up, content of lunch and time of going to bed. Letters on the other hand varied in content much more in that they would also address the nuances of family life or interaction other than the immediacy of the SAW whereas diaries tended to be more focussed on the SAW itself. The blend of the two helped situate the SAW soldier in all his complexities by allowing access to a range of his soldiering experiences whether that was writing letters for an audience back home or writing a diary that would eventually be read back home as was the case with Captain PH Normand who writes home²⁵; ‘My dear Father, I am sending with this letter a sort of diary...’.

It is also worth recording that the narrative of masculinity could vary in frequency form source to source. Some narratives contained frequent reference to the themes of masculinity I identified and others less so. This in itself could be problematic for although I suggest this is indicative of the fluidity of masculinity as presented in SAW soldiers’ narratives I am assuming my taxonomy of masculinity and the SAW is truly reflective.

²⁵ January 16th 1900, letter, NAM 1998-02-07.

Fig. v. Diary with Bullet Hole



3.10 Capturing the visual war

It was never the original intention of using photographs in the thesis as the work progressed both in archives and reading published collections their prominence became obvious. I have therefore included a number of them to help illustrate the work or as Plummer suggests it can help ‘accessorise’ the narrative (2005:58-66). Riessman (2008) also highlights how photographs can be used as a methodology and one of the examples she uses is the work of Creef (2004) who used photographic imagery to create a new story, a counter narrative, to challenge the misshapen and overtly racialized story of Japanese Americans in World War Two (2008: 145-153). Although there is a separate visual sociology that can be addressed (Plummer 2005:58) it is not my intention to review it here but rather to acknowledge it as a possible research possibility (this will be addressed in Chapter Eight).

3.11 Aftermath- summary conclusion

According to Hill (1993:6), an archival work contains ‘perpetual surprises, intrigues and apprehensions’. Similar sentiments could be voiced about this piece of research. On first impressions, my work may appear to have been conducted with some ease by locating diaries and letters belonging to soldiers who fought in South Africa over a hundred years ago, and by applying to this material a standard test to measure masculinity. But this would be an oversimplification. The work required me to learn new research techniques and work within an archival domain that has been described as a ‘theatre of memory’ (Fitzgerald 2005:659). I chose my methodology in order to elicit the richest possible data and to create as acute a critical awareness of it as possible. Linking the methods and methodology of the research process to my chosen field of investigation – war and masculinity – required me to employ a reflexive approach; I will argue that doing so enhanced the overall result of my work. In the aftermath of the methodological and method decisions there are always questions to be answered, and perhaps the one I must face whether or not I have discarded too much material

in the quest for richer research material? I would hope that I have achieved my goal by being able to examine in detail the material I have selected and I hope that in true minimalist fashion, as Bryman (2004: 533) suggests, less is more.

Court of enquiry- possible courts martial?

The research process I engaged in highlighted a number of key issues for me some have been resolved and others remain open and unanswered. My initial rush to engage with the narrative material on reflection should have been tempered by the need of the more systematic approach I later adopted. My early unbridled enthusiasm was and is still understandable but the even greater need to stand apart from the narrative material in the first instance was more of an imperative. One thing I would do in future would be to have the confidence to abandon letters and diaries at a much earlier stage than I actually did. I made an attempt to read each page of letters, or bundles of letters, and diaries that looking back were never going to become more legible but at the time I was determined to read each and every page and scour the content for relevant data. This turned out to be a very time consuming and quite frankly tiring and demotivating engagement which in the end did nothing to help progress the thesis but at the time I felt it was the right thing to do.

My research goal of analysing soldiers' narratives in relation to their masculinity was partially driven by my own desire to understand more my own masculinity and what it meant to be a man. What my own research has demonstrated is that my understanding of masculinity as a theoretical construct is stronger now than it ever was and that my critical analysis of SAW soldiers has helped me articulate the structure that a hegemonic masculinity can impose and the agency that it can also invite. It has exposed me to the realities of archival research with its positive and negative aspects but most of all the research process has started a process of intellectual stimulation that will hopefully continue to make intellectual links between personal narratives and sociological enquiry.

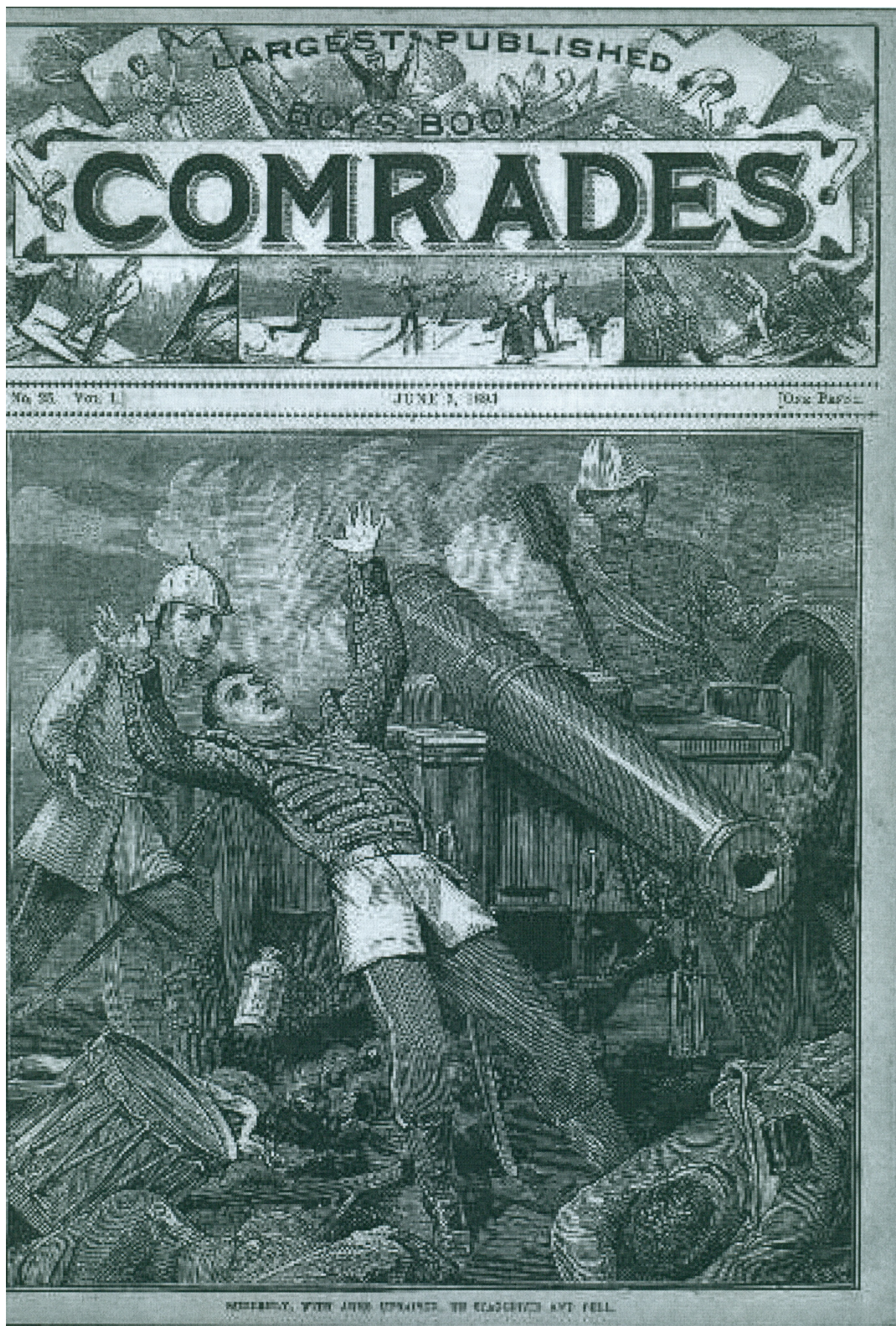
The next chapter will share the initial biographical detail that I argue is necessary in order to fully situate the soldiers' narratives so that they can be better understood in terms of the socio-cultural dynamics that they operated in and from which they were generated.

3.12 Research ethics.

I made diligent efforts to contact and seek permission from authors whose permission was necessary because their work had appeared published volumes. For those archived resources that fall outside copyright boundaries, the ethical demand that I should not falsely represent them was held paramount, as was the respect they deserved. I also was guided by the British Sociological Association (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice²⁶.

²⁶ <http://www.britisoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm>.

Fig vi. Adventure Stories for Boys



Chapter Four

Historicising the SAW- Making manly men, the Imperial Soldier and taking the war to South Africa

Something in the English

If you're wounded by a savage foe and bugles sound "Retire"
There's something in the English after all,
You may bet your life they'll carry you beyond the zone of fire,
For there's something in the English after all
Yes, although their guns be empty & their blood be ebbing fast,
And to stand by wounded comrades be to fall
Yet they'll set their teeth like bulldogs and protect you to the last,
Or they'll die like English soldiers after all.

(A poem to the fallen British Heroes) *Boys of our Empire, 14 December 1901*

4.1 Introduction

During the reign of Queen Victoria 1837-1901, the nineteenth century witnessed considerable changes in terms of political, social and cultural shifts (Boyd and Mc William 2007). This chapter has two main divisions: the first traces an array of socio-cultural experiences and demonstrates how these were played out by the manly dramatis personae, while the second moves on to examine how 'Tommy' and his officers became engaged in the conflict and finally to give details of the war itself. Given the coterminous nature of masculinity and manliness used in this thesis, the remainder of this chapter will make reference to manliness only.

The development of an industrial society in Britain had an irreversible affect on the lives of ordinary people, with over sixty percent of the population moving into urban towns to service this new enterprise. This movement caused substantial upheaval in the way people

lived, organised and related to each other. As the century progressed skilled working men began to organise through the labour and trade union movement challenging the hegemony of the upper middle classes and sharpening class divisions (Hall and McClelland et al. 2000). Education gained more prominence; there was the development of the public schools for the middle classes and the industrial and Christian schools for the poor, finally leading to the instigation of universal primary education up to the age of eleven in 1880. There was a flowering of intellectual development and scientific enquiry alongside cultural and new consumer opportunities. The role and expectation of 'being a man' was changing in response to these conditions. Overarching all these changes was the continued expansion of the British Empire, of which South Africa, offering significant opportunity for the creation of wealth would prove to be the powder keg at the end of the century. If, as Wacquant (2010) suggests, it would enhance a readers experience of research if they were privy to and actually experienced the research environment and it was possible for the reader of this thesis to experience the sensations of growing up a man in this period, then setting off to fight in South Africa, it would enhance the reader's experience of the research. Given that this is unachievable, this chapter attempts to give the reader a sense of the period by creating a tableau of the accepted principles of manliness and how they influenced soldiers who went out to fight in the SAW. Part One addresses domestic socio-cultural influences on manliness and Part Two on the composition of the Victorian army and the lead up to the SAW.

Part One - Manliness on the home front

4.2 Victorian Manliness

During the nineteenth century the meaning of being a man was changing through new definitions devised by the middle classes; such definitions were contrived and controlled by hegemonic notions of manhood (Tosh 2005). For example, indices of manhood and manliness such as independence, authority, autonomy and self control were lauded; by the

middle of the century, 'manliness' was de rigueur for all male persons (Hallgrimsdottir and Adams 2004:277). With the idea of manliness came an idealised set of codified behaviours which purported to epitomise all the virtues with which men should be endowed. These included patriotism, bravery, stoicism and honour – in fact, all the attributes of the supreme warrior hero (Dawson 2005). These were qualities that chimed with the ideals of the expansionist British Empire, supporting its imperial policy which was deemed to be a manly affair (Semple 2008).

Manliness became a measure against which men could evaluate other men (Braudy 2003). As the *fin de siècle* of the nineteenth century approached and the SAW loomed large, manliness came to symbolise a lot more than how a man should behave: it became the *modus operandi* of an imperial manliness that was to be embodied in the British soldier going off to fight in the SAW. This manly imperial soldier had been groomed for the imperial mission and was closely linked with Britain's geo-political expansionism; he was the vanguard and the ultimate expression of the Victorian manly man carrying forward the fight to maintain and nurture the British Empire (Rutherford 1997:17). The British Empire itself was 'in a fundamental sense, a test of the nation's virility' (Tosh 2005:193).

In order to provide the men who would carry the boundaries of the Empire forward there was a whole range of socio-cultural interventions and influences in the nineteenth century that created the 'life scripts' for boys and men; these were dominated by the need to produce manly men with strength of character (Collini 2007:100). These 'life scripts' or more appropriately in this context, 'man scripts', came from a range of sources including home and the wider domestic sphere, church, state, teachers, peers and a range of media (Paris 2000). The mechanism by which these coded scripts of behaviour became a conduit for integrating men into society as manly men will be considered in the first part of this chapter (Gilmore 1990:224).

Manliness was from its outset meant to act as ‘an antidote to the poison of effeminacy’ (Watson et al 2005: [2]). From the early part of the nineteenth century, the graven image of Victorian manliness was already being hewed out of a set of codified behaviours, behaviours that favoured a strict adherence to the physicality of the body through participation in sport and to the moral purity of the mind (Watson et al 2005, Shepard 2005, Collini 2007). The ethos of intellect, morality and sexual purity, was promoted by Thomas Arnold, the reforming headmaster of Rugby public school 1828-1841, to whom character formation rather than academic excellence was the priority (Burton 2001). His son Matthew the poet wrote ‘Rugby Chapel’ a poem that encapsulates the essence his father’s ideal of manly behaviour that demands the intrinsic values of unselfishness, thoughtfulness and a sense of ‘noblesse oblige’ (Spiers 1999) :

Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me today
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper’d with fire,
Fervent, heroic and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind

(Matthew Arnold, November 1857)

This message of developing ‘character’ was whole-heartedly embraced by the middle-class dominated public schooling system, championed by the well known headmaster Thomas Carlyle. He advocated an aggressive ‘Muscular Christianity’ which built on and supplanted the earlier message of Thomas Arnold. The new philosophy of ‘Muscular Christianity’ sounded a clarion call at home and abroad, and became an aspiration for manly men (Kimmel 1991, Garton 2002). Edward Thring, the headmaster of Uppington School, summed up the public schooling ethos thus: ‘With all their faults, the public schools are the

cause of manliness' (Mangan and Walvin 1987:249). Public schools drew in the sons of the upper and middle class families; it was no coincidence that the public school system was the academic feeder for Oxbridge, where a strong connection with British political and imperial destiny was cemented. Oxbridge graduates became an integral part of British Imperial ambition; they pursued successful civil service careers and travelled the world to serve the Empire in the vanguard of colonial expansion. Thus, Sudan was said to be 'a country of blacks ruled by blues'²⁷, (Money 1997:173). Although Muscular Christianity with its sporting prowess, fair play, fit bodies for fit minds, and self restraint appears to have been dominated by the middle classes, we must not ignore the fact that its ideology filtered down to the lower classes and was promulgated among them by Christian organisations. The values of Thomas Arnold were conveyed through organisations like the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) which was founded on June 6 1844 in London by Sir George Williams. The YMCA was built on Christian principles, the aim to encourage young working class boys to acquire a 'healthy mind, spirit and body'. As the century progressed there was a subtle shift away from the Arnoldian style of manliness to that of Carlyle with his valorising of national action heroes like Cromwell and Nelson. This more forceful approach to developing Muscular Christianity can best seen in the working-class oriented Boys' Brigade (Keegan 2001:461). This was founded by William Smith, businessman, churchman and part time soldier on October 4 1883, specifically for older working class boys. His aim was to devise something that would appeal to the heroic side of their nature and 'see that in the service of God there is as much scope for all that is brave and true and manly in the service of King and Country' (McFarlan 1997). He based the Brigade on drill, discipline and military order, boys could attain badges in recognition for gaining a range of skills and there was a strong emphasis on

²⁷ This is a reference to the 'blues' of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, dark blue for Oxford and light blue for Cambridge. 'Blues' were awarded for sporting excellence in representing each University.

sport. Even today, in the pamphlet, 'First for Boys', the history of Boys Brigade' William Smith is described as 'tall, manly and military in bearing' (McFarlan 1997).

4.3 From cradle to grave: Creating the manly man; literature, comics, books and music hall

From 1870 onwards, the growing rise in literacy among the population led to a substantial demand for juvenile literature (Hugill1999). This was followed in the 1880's by a veritable explosion of literature aimed at young boys and men, filled with exhortations to be manly, especially within works of imperial imagining, in which 'The national hero was now a warrior and a patriotic death in battle was the finest masculine virtue' (Mangan 1996:15). In this literature, the ideation of manliness derived from 'Muscular Christianity' pervaded everything to one purpose: to teach young boys how to grow up into mature manly men; for the most part, this call to manliness was contextualised in British imperialism and the Empire (Hugill 1999:320). Even very young children were not exempt and in 1899, Mrs. Ernest Ames published *An ABC for Baby Patriots* (see Appendix 4). This was a book to help young children learn their alphabet, designed for consumption both at home in Britain and abroad in the colonies. It represents a culmination of the national imperial psyche, the first letter 'A' sets the tone for the rest of the alphabet: 'A is the Army that dies for the Queen; it's the very best Army that ever was seen' right through to 'Z': 'Z is for zeal, which everywhere is seen, When a family practices, "God save the Queen"' (Silver 2007/2008:14, 15).

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a greater volume of literature centred on manly adventure and 'daring do', where such conceits came to be entwined with military adventure and warrior heroes. The publication '*The Boys of England*' had a peak circulation of 250,000 copies in 1871, yet the readership was much greater, estimated to be read by more than two million children per week (Riches et al 2009). Working boys would

contribute a farthing towards clubs, which would then buy their favourite paper to be shared amongst them (Riches et al 2009). In these publications the image of the soldier was being used to create a manly narrative designed to elevate the status of the imperial soldier to that of brave and noble hero. The *Boys Own Paper* regularly featured war stories in which young boys would be plunged into adventure and glory as powder monkeys or drummer boys. The paper ran from 1879 right through to 1967 and was driven by a code of morality fixed in religious values that also applauded manly and patriotic behaviour (Dunae 1980: 108). The *Union Jack* launched in 1880 also focused on war and adventure, drawing links between heroism and sermonising in an editorial published in 1882 gave this advice to its young readers (Riches et al 2009):

Strive to be true. Strive to be pure. Strive to leave the world a better place than you found it. Have some object in your life; some prize, and strive until it is yours...never be discouraged. Let your trust be in God; and in the right fight on – fight ever – and, if needful, fighting die.

These sentiments reflected the ‘character building’ of Thomas Arnold where it was as important to be guided by moral standards as to be patriotic and brave. Some publications carried out illustrative morality tales, stories that acted out concerns about how young white men might be tempted by immoral behaviour and showing how good self discipline and moral fortitude could save the young from corruption (Hugill 1999:326).

The competition for this young audience grew as the century progressed, the rivalry between magazines and weekly papers produced a plethora of titles; in order to attract their readership the blatant imperialism in the stories was ratcheted up, particularly through *The Boys Own Paper*, *Union Jack*, *Chums and Pluck* (Mangan and MacKenzie 2008:1279).

Regular features such as ‘*Some Famous British Battles*’²⁸ covered famous British victories, and stories of manly heroism in ‘*With Fire and Sword*’²⁹ and ‘*Times of peril – A Tale of the Indian Mutiny*’³⁰, transformed the regular soldier into manly imperial warrior. These ‘ripping yarns’ featured heavily in the *Empire Annual for Boys* and were eagerly read by an increasingly literate audience of young boys and men. The stories encouraged them to embrace sports, sportsmanship and team spirit. The literature created was not just for the home market: much of it was embraced by the colonies of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. They, of course also produced their own versions of patriotic material, issuing literature that was not just aimed at boys but looked to the adult market, as, for example, was the case with the poetry of the religious press in Canada (Heath 2002). Before long, this image of a puissant manliness defined against fragile femininity became standard literary fare for aspiring heroes (Paris 2000).

This heroic image of manly self sacrifice came to be portrayed in a range of cultural arenas encompassing the boys’ adventure comic books to public sermons and speeches, music hall songs and poetry. A whole literary canon was propagated, in which the virtues of manliness were extolled, especially in the context of a quest for empire; a sought-after warrior masculinity was being mapped into a ‘geography of adventure’ (Phillips 2010). This included the American wild west, that was romanticised in the novels of Bret Harte and Captain Mayne Reid (Windholz 1999:633-636) and similarly, R.M. Ballantyne’s novel of heroic exploration of the North Pole (Deane 2008:214) introduced another exotic realm to young men in search of adventure. Thus, a body of mostly fictive writing was brought into existence. Aimed at young readers, it merged heroic war action with high moral purpose (Paris 2000:50).

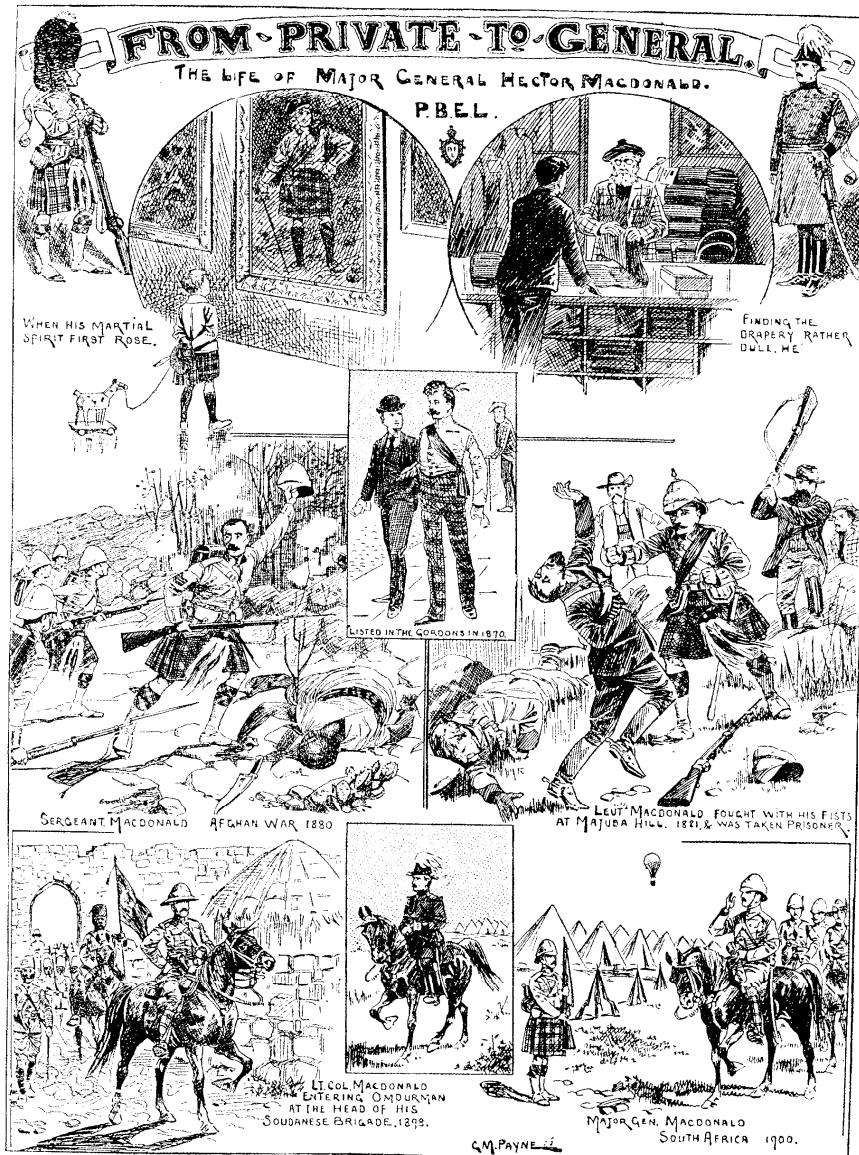
²⁸ The Boys Own Paper 9th. October 1880.

²⁹ Union Jack 1st. January 1880.

³⁰ Union Jack 4th. February 1880 – Story written by G.A.Henty.

Fig vii. From Private to General

CHAPTER TWO:



The underlying context of the stories was the validation of aggressive British imperial militarism in which the white English male was both manly and supremely civilised. For example, Rider Haggard's hero *Allan Quartermain* makes his first appearance in 1885 in the novel *King Solomon's Mines* an adventure set in Africa where he faces grave dangers requiring deeds of ingenuity and heroism, nobly engaging in gallant battles with barbaric savages in the glorious pursuit of legendary riches. This story found an eager and enthusiastic audience, so much so that 30,000 copies of this novel had been sold by September 1885, the year of publication. His hero *Quartermain* epitomises the manly imperial adventurer and although Haggard intends his hero's final appearance to be in the novel *Alan Quartermain* written in 1887 in which he dies; the popularity of his character is such that he has to be resurrected in later works. Haggard dedicated *Alan Quartermain* to his son, an act that proves revealing in the way he positions his own gentlemanly status and alludes to its perpetuation:

I inscribe this book of adventure to my son ARTHUR JOHN RIDER in the hope that in days to come he, and many other boys whom I shall never know, may, in the acts and thoughts of Allan Quartermain and his companions, as herein recorded, find something to help them to reach what, with Sir Henry Curtis, I hold to be the highest rank where to we can attain – the state and dignity of English gentlemen.³¹

The adventure novels that sold in their tens of thousands also had an air of respectability (Dunae 1980, Hugill 1999) between them; they conjure up tales of manly daring and courage, racial superiority and an irrepressible sense of imperial destiny – a destiny that all boys were born to fulfil. Dawson (2005:233-258) observes that the nineteenth century witnessed the development of what he calls 'the pleasure of war', where war was being reconfigured as entertainment for the masses. By the 1850s and 1860s right through to the start of the SAW and beyond the British soldier was being presented as a heroic warrior

³¹ Dedication in *Allan Quartermain* by Henry Rider Haggard, 1887.

through a number of cultural representations such as fiction, poetry, visual arts as the masculine ideal (Paris 2000:8,13,27 Dawson 2005). This was the Victorian socio-cultural milieu that both ‘Tommy’ and his officers were growing up from boys to men.

An 1891 book of poems by W.E. Henley devoted to the glory of battle, patriotism and heroic death became a best seller and was reviewed as ‘A manly book, which should delight manly boys and manly men’ (Mangan and MacKenzie 2008:1092). Henley was at the vanguard of the pro-imperial literati and did much in his own literary works to create the heroic images of the soldier that became so prevalent in the years just prior to and during the SAW. The following verse from his poetry encapsulates the essence of a national superior manly warrior:

England my England
Where shall the watchful sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice again
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown.

The imperial soldier was a man of character, capable of manly and heroic deeds that inspired those around him, and his manliness became the fashion for all men to emulate. This creatively fashioned imperial manliness was as much the domain of men from the upper

classes, such as Lord Kitchener (the future Commander-in-Chief in the SAW) and the lower ranks that were made up by the proverbial 'Tommy Atkins'³².

For adults, such imperial aspirations became the theme of music hall songs and performances, although the different classes favoured different types of theatre, with the upper classes in London choosing West End variety theatre locations (Attridge 1993). The jingoism³³ which became prevalent during the SAW manifested itself in songs like 'The Soldiers of the Queen' written in 1881. Its chorus became very well known:

It's the soldiers of the queen my lads
Who've been my lads,
Who've seen my lads,
In the fight for England's glory, lads
Of its world-wide glory let us sing
And when we say we've always won.
And when they ask us how its done.
We'll proudly point to ev'ry one
Of England's soldiers of the queen.

Throughout the Victorian era the soldiers of the Queen were variously portrayed as, 'swaggering toff, spurious ornament, sexual adventurer, decadent, drunk, coward, thief and occasional hero' (Attridge 1993:52). This is not to say that the portrayal of the soldier was malicious, but it certainly reflected public anxieties about soldiery at large. It was a more realistic version of soldier heroes than the literature for juveniles tended to portray. Yet at the

³² It is suggested that it was Henley who identified how Tommy Atkins (or 'Tommy') came to be named as such from military forms in so much that a general form was produced detailing how it should be filled in under the generic name 'Tommy Atkins' and subsequently popularised by Rudyard Kipling (Attridge 1993). For a detailed review of the influence of literature and music hall, see Attridge (1993) 'The Soldier in late Victorian Society: images and ambiguities'.

³³ Jingoism is the term used to describe the public political fervour that extols patriotic xenophobia and is derived from a Victorian song called 'We don't want to fight' and specifically the chorus line, 'We don't want to fight but by Jingo if we do'.

beginning of the SAW the idea that it was the duty of manly men to respond to the call to arms for the Empire in time of war had been well assimilated into the public consciousness.

4.4 Manly sportsmen and Manly friendship

The consummate Victorian manly man could also be identified by appropriate characteristics. These included physical strength, honed muscular bodies, and a presentation of a sporting self that exuded the manly qualities of bravery, fortitude and stoicism (Connell 1995). As far back as 1857, young men and boys were schooled in prescribed activities to promote manliness, with a growing emphasis on physical activity and sport (Adams 1995:71, Beynon 2002:27). In Victorian and Edwardian Britain, the aesthetics of physical strength and beauty dominated (Mosse 1996), and the fit male body became an ideal canvas on which to sketch imperial aspirations of manliness. There was popular interest in body building and related activities in later Victorian times, leading to a belief in the ‘fit male body’ as a prerequisite for manly support of the Empire (Zweiniger-Bargiellowska 2006:596). Lord Kitchener, who became the Commander-in-Chief of the SAW from 1900 onwards, was described as the personification of imperial military manhood due to his imposing physique (SurrIDGE 2001:307). This musculature to manliness link continues to remain established, as Beynon (2002:51) suggests: ‘Men have long held muscles, especially of the biceps, neck and shoulders, to be signifiers of “proper masculinity”’. The soldiers of the SAW would often write in their diaries of the physical appearance of themselves and their comrades measuring this against an idealised image of manliness.

The playing of sport became the means for the acquisition of a fit healthy body, but it also inculcated the manly values of team playing, leadership, tenacity and courage. Robert Baden-Powell the British army officer in command of the siege of Mafeking, considered the

sport of pig sticking, that is hunting pigs with short spears, as a valuable means to promote manliness (Park 2008:1051)³⁴. The humanitarian Henry Salt stated:

Sport is a form of war and war a form of sport. Those who defend such institutions as the Eton Beagles on the grounds that boys who indulge them were thereby trained to be future stalwarts of Imperialism are justified in their contention. Need we wonder that wars flourish without regard to justice or morality and that an English officer could describe as 'excellent pig sticking' the slaughter of Dutchmen.

(Henry Salt (1930) cited in Mangan and McKenzie 2008:1058).

The sporting fraternity that belonged to the British upper class saw their manliness in part defined by the sport of hunting. Hunting became a signifier of manhood, the rationale being that a good hunter would become a good soldier: hunting provided the training ground for the cavalry, who would carry forward the imperial banner in the quest for noble colonial supremacy. This all helped engender a militaristic social milieu which bathed in manly imperialism. In her autobiography Esme Wingfield-Stratford recalls the years before World War One:

The whole atmosphere of the time seemed to be faintly redolent of gunpowder... among those who professed to call themselves gentlefolk in the *fin de siècle* – and I think this would apply to an even wider circle – everybody seemed to be talking about the two linked attractions of war and empire.

(cited in Mangan and McKenzie 2008:87).

The world of hunting helped create an amalgam of the sports man as hunter as soldier. The future officer class was learning its battlefield craft in sports such as big game hunting (Mangan and McKenzie 2008).

³⁴ The special edition publication of the *International Journal of the History of Sport*, co-authored by Mangan and McKenzie (2008) extensively details the sport and manliness nexus in the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras.

Participating in sport was not just the prerogative of the middle and upper classes, Christian organisations attempted to work with working class boys to produce physically fit bodies for morally fit minds through organisations such as the YMCA and the Boys' Brigade (Nagel 1998:249). Better working conditions with time off at weekends enabled working men to engage in sporting activities. Football became the major sport for working class men, local teams gaining prominence with both amateur and professional sportsman taking part. The Football Association founded in 1863 reluctantly had to accept this change of participants as working men overturned the hegemony of army officers and public school old boys in the Association, resulting in the establishment of the Football League in 1888 (Walton 2001). This challenge to the established hegemonic structures by working men would be reflected in the SAW as soldiers began to question the actions and attitudes of the officer class. A central feature for both sets of future imperial soldiers was the male comradeship that they experienced before the SAW and subsequently during it.

Manly men desired the company of other manly men, and the late Victorian period provided opportunities for such association to take place. The British Empire was a site of 'masculinist imaginings' in which men could enjoy homosocial comradeship in physically challenging and arduous circumstances without feminine interference (Dawson 2005). Many of the military heroes of the SAW were men who actively sought the company of other men to the exclusion of women. They were bachelors like Baden-Powell (although he did eventually marry very late in life) or Kitchener. Cecil Rhodes³⁵ would not even employ female servants. These 'gentlemen bachelors' surrounded themselves with young men and enjoyed strong homosocial relationships (Rutherford 1997). There was intense homophobia during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and manly homosociality was perceived as an

³⁵ Cecil Rhodes was arguably one of the main instigators of the SAW; along with Alfred Milner, he artificially created the conditions for war which some commentators locate more in the mining rights for diamonds and precious metals than problems of the franchise of 'Uitlanders' (foreign mostly British workers in the Boer republics who were being denied voting rights (Spies 1977).

antidote to the threat of homosexuality (Weeks 1995). Foucault makes the observation that this era was one in which homosexuality was viewed in increasingly pejorative terms, with the result that there was immense social pressure for men *not* to be labelled homosexual (1998:101). Imperial manliness was rooted in a Eurocentric, white, Anglo Saxon heterosexuality that welcomed the comradeship of other like minded men in homosocial congress (Kimmel 1987:279). From earlier in the century when men's brotherhoods provided homosocial foci (Adams 1995: 61-106), such like minded men were able to engage in a range of leisure activities in a bachelor club environment, 'sinful' or otherwise, that were the domain of males only (Tosh 1999, Huggins 2000,) and did not exhibit any of the tensions that might label their behaviour inappropriate and eroticised (Reeser 2010).

Industrialisation had changed the social landscape, as working men began to recognise the value of the skills they had developed they began to form into organisations to demand better working conditions and pay. For working men, their manliness lay in their strength through association, their need to protect their families, and self improvement. The 1860's saw a flourishing of Trade Unions, co-ops, friendly societies, working men's clubs and reading rooms and working men's temperance organisations (Hall et al 2000). Although these brotherhoods had a practical focus, they still allowed strong homosocial bonds to be formed. Through their brand of muscular Christianity and moral training, organisations like the Boys' Brigade and the Church Lads' Brigade (1891) taught manly behaviour to working class boys. It is hard to assess the impact of exposure to socio-cultural indoctrination. But, however generated and maintained, in the latter part of the nineteenth century there was a manliness that could be tangibly described: it promoted a hegemonic masculinity acted out in codes of manly behaviour by a number of men who freely embraced its existence as a moral imperative through which they would act out their gender. It was also embraced with some

reluctance by men conscious of the sanctions that could be wielded by other men if they did not adhere to such manly aspirations.

Much of the academic literature I have referred to is located in middle-class representations of manliness, and there is no doubt that this leaves a piece of the jigsaw missing. A substantial amount of the literature can be attributed to John Tosh, who suggested that the essence of manliness lay in it having to be earned and that this was something that distinguished it from gentlemanliness, which was a class elite term. It could therefore be free from class reference, since all classes could subscribe to it (Tosh 2002). However, Tosh provides a caveat when he remarks that working class manliness is bound up with an ‘aggressive celebration of physical strength as the exclusive badge of masculinity’ (2005:37), but acknowledges that scholarly activity in this area has been neglected (2005:202).

The soldiers responding to the call of the SAW would hold these different versions of manliness in their armoury of responses to fighting in South Africa, yet be certain that in responding to the Imperial call they would be fulfilling their rightful destiny as defenders of the Empire. In the second part of this chapter I shall examine in some detail how these soldiers actually were drawn into the SAW.

(Part Two) – Preparation for the Battle Front

This part of the chapter considers the composition of the British Victorian Army, its structure, its gradual reforms and its relationship with British society at large in the lead up to the SAW. I shall place in context the SAW with a brief overview of the events that led up to the conflict, followed by a chronology of its development. The role of the British press will also be considered, together with the extraordinary health issues that affected both British and Boer soldiers alike. The chapter will be summarised in preparation for the empirical chapters five, six and seven that follow immediately after.

4.5 Soldiers of the Queen

Queen Victoria's army was in constant military engagement throughout her reign and even after her death in 1901 the SAW raged on. There had been the Crimean War (1853-1856), unrest in Ireland, the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Maori Wars (1845-1872), the Anglo-Sudan War (1881-1899), the Anglo-Egyptian War (1881-02), and the Afghan Wars of (1839-1842) and (1878-1879). At no time in her reign was the Empire ever totally at peace. British soldiers travelled the world in its defence (Knight 1996). In the early period of Victoria's rule, the ordinary soldier was poorly paid, subject to harsh discipline (including branding and flogging)³⁶ and his relationship with the rest of society left him with the status of a pariah. The army was dependent on voluntary service and at the beginning of Victoria's reign the rank and file were recruited mainly from the unemployed and hungry; in the 1830's over half enlisted men were Irish escaping from poverty (Knight 1996). Recruiting Sergeants regularly based themselves in pubs, persuading men to join with the promise of regular meals and adventure. This did not give the public a very good opinion of the soldiers, and they were viewed as people to be avoided and not the example of imperial manly warriors they were to become by the end of the century.

The officers at this time were the antithesis of the rank and file, the army was regarded as an admirable career, second sons of influential families were often expected to take up commissions and carry on military family traditions. Unlike the ordinary soldier, the officer class was primarily recruited from County communities with their own beliefs in tradition, honour and patriotism (Knight 1996) leaving little in common with the men they commanded. For officers, there was an established system of purchasing commissions; this meant that an individual could buy a particular rank depending on his financial situation.

³⁶ The 'Cat' or 'Cat of nine tails' was a whipping device used to discipline soldiers until its abolition in 1881. Deserters could also be branded by a stamping tool with the letter 'D' under their arm until it too was abolished in 1871 (Knight 1996).

Thus, for example, £750 could buy a lieutenant's rank while £8000 and upwards could buy that of a captain or a lieutenant-colonel. This could lead to a situation where a group of senior officers might be in command yet lack any real aptitude for military strategy: an illustration of this is the infamous 'Charge of the Light Brigade' in 1854, during the Crimean war led by Lord Cardigan, who had bought his commission for £40000. There was also another class of officer the 'Gentleman Ranker', these were gentlemen who had enlisted in the ranks in the hope of finding a promotion, some achieved this but without the backing of sufficient funds this was a difficult route to achieve.

The Crimean War (1853-1856) starkly exposed to the British public the weaknesses of the Military structures, communication and the growing literacy of an urban population had a profound effect. Throughout the war there was constant press coverage; William Howard Russell of the Times filed regular reports, reinforced by hundreds of uncensored private letters sent home by all ranks, many of these finding their way into the local and national press (Kelly 2007). A journal kept by Mrs Henry Duberly who accompanied her officer husband to the Crimea first published in 1854 proved so popular that a second edition had to be published the following spring. While all of these highlighted the dreadful conditions that rank and file men endured, and the ineptitude of commanding officers, they also began to praise the bravery, stoicism and patriotism of the soldiers.

Edward Cardwell was Secretary of State for War (1868-1874) and took on the responsibility for reforms in the Army. The Cardwell reforms attempted to put the army onto a more professional footing, with proper training for officers, better equipment, an end to the purchase of commissions, and improvements to discipline and general organisation. In order to improve the rank and file recruit he introduced 'short service' enlistment, which would enable a soldier to enlist for six years, but they had to stay on the reserve for six years after their initial engagement. This made the army a more attractive option; previously soldiers had

had to sign up for up to twenty five years. He also localised the home army, basing battalions in specific territorial areas, to encourage greater loyalty and comradeship (Spiers1999).

The abolishing of the purchase of commissions did not change the quality of the officer class immediately; there were still those that had purchased their commissions prior to 1870 who remained in post. Training for officers, leading to promotion could now be attained by attending a two year course at the Staff College at Camberley and from 1870 onwards the quality of tutors was significantly improved. Despite this, the entrance and graduation from the college could still be influenced by family position and prestige. Major General Garnet Wolseley firmly believed that the officer's ability to command was very much dependent on possessing the appropriate character, he contended:

their qualities of command derived from their noble and manly qualities as gentlemen, from their innate love of sport and adventure, and their 'varied experience and practice in war'. The 'British Officer', he contended, 'is by birth and education the natural leader of the British private... (Spiers1999).

The ability to lead was firmly framed within the concept of the superior nobility, and patriotism of the gentleman officer class, it was also tinged with the Matthew Arnold's ideal of 'noblesse oblige' resulting in some officers developing a paternalistic responsibility to their men. Despite this the clear class divide would remain between officer and 'Tommy' with officers confident in their superior social status, and has remained an embedded feature of the British army to the present day (Clayton 2007).

By 1898 'Tommy' was still predominantly a working-class man, at times driven into the army by economic necessity, at others to seek adventure in foreign parts (Price 1972, Pretorius 1998). A significant proportion of recruits, nearly forty percent in the 1890's had already served in the Militia before they enlisted in the regular army (Spiers 1999). The army was losing its reputation as an organisation to be avoided, and to some represented the door

to adventure, travel and excitement. There was also the influence of Christian organisations who had worked with boys emphasising the manly duty of service to God, Queen and Empire. Despite some twenty seven thousand recruits a year in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, this number was inadequate for the demands placed on the army to maintain the Empire (Oddy 2000, Pakenham 2004). The onset of the SAW changed this by bringing an influx of new recruits spurred on by jingoistic patriotism (Pakenham 2004). These new recruits included working men who had been involved in organising clubs and better conditions for themselves and their families, these men would not remain passive and unquestioning of their officers or of weaknesses in each other. They had a self image of Victorian manliness that was based on duty, strength and fortitude plus an expectation that fighting in the SAW would bestow honour and glory in battle.

The Victorian public's ambiguity and hostility towards the British soldier dramatically changed towards the end of the century, when he began to emerge as a heroic warrior figure. This high status was much helped by the popular expressions of manly imagery described in Part 1 of this chapter. This was also a time when public awareness of the Empire increased, and the role of soldiers in preserving it was given a higher profile. Linked with this was an aggressive imperialism bound up in the manifestation of Victorian manhood that grew to be increasingly identified with a militaristic manliness. The late Victorian soldier came to symbolize manhood and manliness in the eyes of the British public, and his veneration would continue right up to and during the SAW (Knight 1996). It was the SAW that was to provide the opportunity to test the Cardwell reforms, it would be almost thirty years since purchasing commissions had been abolished, rank and file the majority of soldiers were no longer recruited from pubs (Spiers 1999). The soldiers who were sent to fight it had the ideal of Victorian manliness embedded in their psyche against which to measure their own performance and that of their fellows.

4.6 How to start a war

The SAW was the second conflict to take place in South Africa between the British and the Boers: the first had been fought nineteen years earlier, between 1880 and 1881. This earlier conflict between Boer settlers and the British had produced a peace settlement, and out of that four separate states had been created: two British-administered states (Cape Colony and Natal) and two Boer republics, the South African Republic (Z.A.R. or Transvaal) and the Orange Free State. Although the Boer republics were independent, they had agreed to remain subject to British suzerainty. This arrangement stayed intact until the outbreak of the second South African War (1899-1902).

The SAW had its genesis in the British government's determination that those British foreign subjects (Uitlanders³⁷) largely working in the diamond and gold mines in the South African republic of the Transvaal (ZAR) should be given the right to vote. The rich mineral resources discovered in the Transvaal saw an influx of immigrants to meet the needs of the mining industry, many of British origin. President Kruger of the Transvaal saw potential political trouble if an ever burgeoning uitlander population became the majority and, as such, proved able to outvote the Transvaal people. He declared that the right to franchise was dependent on a period of residence of between five and seven years; this was used to whip up political concern, in both South Africa and Britain (Nasson 1999). The seeds of Kruger's actions had been sown in a lack of trust in British intent brought about by the infamous Jameson Raid of 1895 and a concern that the Transvaal people would lose their influence in their own country.

With the connivance of Cecil Rhodes,³⁸ Dr. Leander Starr Jameson had led a disastrous raid into the Transvaal in 1895 in a bid to topple the Transvaal government.

³⁷ Largely English speaking foreigners.

³⁸ Rhodes made a personal fortune in the diamond mines of Kimberley and was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony at the time of the Jameson raid.

Justification for the raid lay in the fiction that the raiders had come to the aid of the disenfranchised uitlanders. Unfortunately, the uitlanders in question failed to rally to the cause, Starr was arrested and publicly humiliated as he was led 'weeping' to jail (Pakenham 2004:5). What the action did highlight however, were the imperial ambitions of Britain and the eagerness of capitalists like Rhodes to acquire rights in the financially lucrative mineral deposits in the Transvaal (Nasson 1999).

In 1899 Alfred Milner the High Commissioner for Southern Africa and Governor of Cape Colony raised the uitlander issue again presenting it as a denial of democratic voting rights to hard working miners. Milner was in fact, advocating military intervention and was vigorously lobbying for it (Pakenham 2004) presenting the refusal of Kruger to grant voting rights as an affront to the British Empire sending a telegram as such:

The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within its own dominions.

(cited in Smurthwaite 2002:26).

A supportive press helped fire the indignation in the British public and the scene became set for the inevitable road to war. A final meeting took place between the British and Boers at Bloemfontein in May of 1899. Milner walked out of that meeting, claiming intransigence by the Boers especially Kruger and relations then deteriorated to a point where the Boers withdrew from negotiations and began to prepare for war. They issued an ultimatum in which they asked for assurances including the withdrawal of British troops already in South Africa, with no further troop additions. The British government replied that no such assurance could be discussed and, in consequence, war was declared on 11 October 1899 (Pakenham 2004). The Boer General Piet Joubert invaded Natal with an army of thirty

five thousand men from the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and General Sir Redvers Buller, a hero of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, was sent to deal with him.

4.7 British war preparations

At the start of the war Britain had high expectations that it would be over by Christmas 1899, it would in effect drag on until May 1902 requiring unprecedented levels of resources (Knight 1996). This expectation was founded on the fact that the army had fifteen thousand soldiers stationed in South Africa, with reinforcements were on their way. The Boers by contrast did not have a standing army, but operated a military system of commando.³⁹ This was a system that created what might be called a genuine citizen's army to which every man between the age of sixteen and sixty could be called up. The British therefore expected their 'superior' Imperial forces to crush the Boers swiftly and put an end to the conflict.

In effect, full mobilisation was needed to support the soldiers already on the spot, and by the end of the war Britain had sent nearly four hundred and fifty thousand soldiers to deal with a Boer army that never exceeded more than thirty-five thousand. Considering that Britain's standing army numbered fewer than two hundred and fifty thousand at the beginning of the war, this mobilisation was a remarkable feat (Bennett 1999). It meant that Britain needed to call upon her dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand to support the mother country by raising large numbers of volunteers. What was initially believed to be a minor war was to turn into a prolonged major campaign that was to test the resolve not only of 'Tommy' and his officers, but of the British nation as a whole. As well as the army reservists,⁴⁰ Britain needed to recruit large numbers of volunteer soldiers.

³⁹ Commando refers to the military organisation of the Boers while Kommando refers to the wider setting of the military organisation in its socio- political setting (Swart 1998:738).

⁴⁰ After a period of military service soldiers were required to remain as reservists for a set number of years in order that in times of need they could be 'returned to the colours', that is re-engaged (Spiers 1999).

The Volunteer movement, as it became known, comprised three main units: the active service companies raised in early 1900; the City Imperial Volunteers (CIV);⁴¹ and the Imperial Yeomanry which came into being through Royal Warrant in December 1899. The Imperial Yeomanry constituted nearly three quarters of the volunteer fighting units and was at the time categorised as a body of ‘gentleman rankers’, given the high proportion of their number that hailed from the middle classes (Bennett 1999). They were a mixture of units, some raised by wealthy individuals such as Lord Lovat (Lovat’s Horse) and Lord Paget (Paget’s Horse), thus giving some substance to the claim that the SAW was the last of the gentlemen’s wars (Price 1972)⁴². Units from Ireland consisted of men from well established hunts and comprised many sons of wealthy professionals (Bennett 1999:14, 15). Although these very wealthy volunteers were not representative of the majority, they were valued and considered superior to the professional regular soldier. They were deemed to hold all the qualities necessary, the ability to act within the norms of gentlemanly conduct, having honour, integrity and courage along with a capacity for generosity and the deportment of persons in polite society (Spiers 1999).

Reasons given for the huge upsurge in recruitment vary from Price’s well-argued contention that economic hardship was more of a recruiting officer for the working class ‘Tommy’ than patriotism, to the argument that the working class possessed a sense of ambivalence to the war, in marked contrast to middle-class enthusiasm (Price 1972). The answer must lie somewhere in a continuum of impulse to join, as pointed out earlier unemployment did play an important role, but this does not preclude the impact of the idea of ‘duty’ and the call of an opportunity to ‘test’ their manhood. It is suggested that, whereas the working class did not buy into the jingoistic proclamations of church, state, and press, the

⁴¹ The C.I.V. were raised and paid for in the City of London. They counted in their number members of parliament, stockbrokers and barristers. They only served until October 1900, most for less than a year (Pakenham 2004).

⁴² Richard Price’s ground-breaking book *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes to the Boer War 1899-1902* is a superbly detailed account of volunteering for the SAW.

middle classes did so fulsomely in order to ‘show their support for the empire’ (Miller 2005:691). I would contend that there is still further research needed in this area, and that the soldiers’ narratives offer an opportunity to further explore this issue.

The volunteers covered a wide range of the British social spectrum from across the British Isles and throughout the Empire and joined the Imperial Yeomanry in their thousands with the first contingent comprising mostly the middle classes and the second contingent comprised mostly the working classes. In the Imperial Yeomanry, a sense of shared national identity proved a source of strength: it built comradeship and created strong bonds between soldiers – something that has been identified for the Scottish regiments (McFarland 2006). The call to arms was also met by the dominions overseas: children of the Empire joined their brothers in arms to fight the Boer; the pacifist Mohandas Gandhi joined the eight hundred Indian stretcher bearers who helped make up a two thousand strong medical detachment formed by the Indian community of Natal (Pakenham 2004:224,225) .

In total, some thirty thousand colonial soldiers fought in the SAW, arriving mainly from Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In Canada, some seven thousand men enlisted, this excluded French Canadians who refused to support calls to send soldiers to South Africa (Miller 1998). The first Canadian contingent, comprising twelve hundred men, landed in South Africa under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Otter on 29 November 1899; a second contingent soon followed early in 1900. Lord Strathcona arrived in April 1900 with his privately financed unit ‘Strathcona’s Horse’, it had a *corps d’élite* reputation as a mounted regiment well suited to the war being waged in South Africa. A large number of Canadians also joined the South African Constabulary.

Australia too answered the call and committed approximately sixteen and a half thousand soldiers. This was before Australia becomes federated: the states that now make up the modern nation of Australia were separate colonies, each one a distinct part of the British

Empire. The contingents sent over to the SAW from 1899 onwards reflected their colonies of origin: The New South Wales Lancers, Queensland Imperial Bushmen, Victorian Rifles and Western Australian Mounted Infantry. It was during the SAW that the six separate colonies in Australia became unified; the first unified Australian contingent, The Australian Commonwealth Horse arrived in South Africa in 1902, just after the war had ended (Wilcox⁴³ 2002).

New Zealand also sent her sons to fight in Africa. Premier R. J. Seddon stressed the 'crimson tie' than joined the mother country to his, 'One flag, one Queen, one tongue' rallying call, and many New Zealanders believed that the war would prove a testing ground for New Zealand manhood (Crawford and McGibbon 2003:3), over six thousand five hundred men served in the SAW. Public support for the war was overwhelmingly positive, and there was little opposition. Apart from troops, New Zealand also sent over female nurses and teachers to work in the concentration camps.

Both the British and the Boers denied using any indigenous blacks in their fighting, but there is contradictory evidence suggesting that some thirty thousand armed black Africans entered into British service (Smurthwaite 2002, Pakenham 2004). The Boers were so incensed when they discovered this, they meted out the most horrific punishments to the black soldiers when they were caught (Nasson 1999). When the Boer General Cronje discovered that during the siege of Mafeking Baden-Powell⁴⁴ had armed a unit of black Africans known as the 'Black Watch' he wrote to him as follows:

it is understood that you have armed Bastards, Fingos⁴⁵ and Barolongs⁴⁶ against us. In this you have committed an enormous act of wickedness... You have created a new

⁴³ Craig Wilcox's (2002) definitive book on the Australian contribution to the SAW is a major source used for this thesis, as was the Australian War Memorial (A.W.M.). Wilcox goes to some length to note how Australian soldiers more often than not are called troopers and their sub-units squadrons.

⁴⁴ Baden-Powell subsequently denied this after the SAW.

⁴⁵ Members of the Fingo tribe, related to the Zulus.

⁴⁶ Or Rolongs; members of the Tswana, a Mafeking tribe.

departure in South African history. It has been a cardinal point in South African ethics, both English and Dutch, to view with horror the idea of arming black against white...reconsider the matter, even if it costs you Mafeking...disarm your blacks and thereby act the part of a white man in a white mans war.

(cited Jackson 2001:39).

Imperial manliness was predicated on a sense of racial superiority that carried with it status and power (Keegan 2001:461). Colonizers were at pains to present their masculinity as culturally superior manliness, in contrast to the colonized peoples whom they had subjugated and gone on to categorize as child-like or effeminate (Connell 1998:13). The black soldiers were used only in support, British soldiers' narratives illustrate that the SAW exemplified the deeply embedded racist attitudes of a white supremacist imperial soldiery.

4.8 Chronology of the SAW

The SAW was prosecuted in three different phases, first of these was the initial British offensive, which endeavoured to engage the Boers quickly in a series of set battles – a strategy that went disastrously wrong for the British. Defeats in battles at the Modder River and Lombard's Kop in late October 1899, where the British lost many killed and captured, gave rise to the phrase 'Mournful Monday'. This was followed soon after by the darkly named 'Black Week' of 10th to 15th December. Here again the British suffered severe defeats and major losses at the battles of Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso. The mood at home in Britain was one of distinct shock that the great British army had been so humiliated (Smurthwaite 2002). To add insult to injury the British found themselves being invested in three sieges at Kimberley, Mafeking and Ladysmith.

Kimberley was a diamond-mining town and headquarters to Cecil Rhodes. From 12 October 1899 until 15 February 1900, it was besieged by the Boers Kimberley had a total population of approximately fifty thousand, including fifteen thousand black Africans and

many families with children, caught up together in the siege (Pakenham 2004). The siege of Mafeking became the most famous of the three, not least because the commanding officer was Lieutenant-Colonel Robert S. S. Baden-Powell, who gained national and international fame. Mafeking was a relatively small town with a population of approximately one thousand five hundred whites and five thousand blacks. Strategically, the Boers could have bypassed it, but instead they chose to invest it between 14th October 1899 and 17th May 1900. Under a tacit ‘gentleman’s agreement’, Baden-Powell and the Boer General Piet Cronje agreed not to fight on a Sunday and to avoid attacks on hospitals (Pakenham 2004). Baden-Powell’s reputation had been established through his heroic manly defence of Mafeking (Nasson 1999) and by now he had found a place in the public imagination at home, where he was their living embodiment of the soldier hero. When Mafeking was relieved, the British public went into a frenzy of jingoistic celebration and did so to such a degree that the word ‘mafficking’ entered the lexicon of public disturbance. How much this huge public outpouring was genuine and how much a result of certain parts of the press whipping up the frenzy is still a matter for debate (Krebs 2004).

Ladysmith too was invested between 2 November 1899 and 27 February 1900. Under the command of General Sir George White, the town was besieged by two Boer Generals, Piet Joubert and Louis Botha. The siege quickly became a matter of routine, with the Boer heavy siege gun the 155 mm Creusot Long Tom firing into the town to be answered by return fire from the Royal Navy.⁴⁷ When finally relieved, there were celebrations at home. These were not quite on the same scale as Mafeking, but Hansard does record a House of Commons debate about riots in Portadown, Northern Ireland⁴⁸:

⁴⁷ For a detailed account of the role of the Royal Navy in the SAW, see *Field Gun Jack versus The Boers: The Royal Navy in South Africa 1899-1902*, Bridgland T (1998).

⁴⁸ Hansard HC Deb 06 March 1900 vol. 80 c217.

The streets of Portadown, like those of other towns in Ulster, were the scene of considerable enthusiasm and excitement when it became known on Wednesday last that Ladysmith had been relieved. It is much to be regretted, however, that amongst the crowds of loyalists who assembled on the occasion in Portadown, there were, unfortunately a number of persons, mainly boys, who indulged in stone throwing and breaking the windows in houses the property of Roman Catholics. Windows in the houses of Protestants were afterwards broken by Roman Catholics.

The second phase of the war saw more aggressive action being taken by the British as the main counter-offensive took place. The sieges were lifted and General Buller had been replaced by Lord Roberts (or 'Bobs' as he was affectionately known) and, with the culmination of this second phase of the SAW, Roberts eventually took Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Boer capital on 5 June 1900. The war appeared to be over and the Boers appeared to be in disarray, but in fact this was just the beginning of the protracted third and final phase of the war, the Guerrilla phase for the Boers and the Scorched Earth phase for the British.

Lord Roberts left South Africa, having finished his job, leaving Lord Kitchener as officer commanding. Kitchener extended the scorched earth policy that had been tacitly put into action in 1900. In essence, this policy was designed to create a situation where the Boer commandos, who were now at large, would be chased until caught. In order to do this a number of interconnected operations took place. A number of 'drives' were set up, whereby a discernable geographical area was secured by block houses behind barbed wire;⁴⁹ after this, British forces would sweep through the cordoned region to trap and capture any commandos within it. Side by side with this, Kitchener ordered a land clearance in commando active areas. This resulted in the mass destruction of Boer farms and livestock, coupled with the detention of Boer civilians (and black Africans) in concentration camps. Conditions in the

⁴⁹ Block houses were defensible mini forts that were strung out every mile or so across vast tracts of land with barbed wire between. Each block house had soldiers living in it who formed a barrier through which the Boers were unable to pass.

camps were cramped and unsanitary, and disease was rife. Although debate continues over conditions in the camps (Stanley 2006), there is no disputing the loss of life. The white Boer population lost 10% of its overall population, equivalent to approximately twenty-eight thousand, most of them women and children. The number of those who died under the age of sixteen was approximately twenty-two thousand, the primary causes of death being measles, whooping cough, pneumonia, chicken pox, mumps and typhoid (Royle 1998). In the camps for black Africans approximately fourteen thousand died out of a total of one hundred and fifteen thousand people spread across sixty camps (Smurthwaite 2002; Fremont-Barnes 2003; and Pakenham 2004). The Scorched Earth policy was decried by the leader of the Liberal party, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, as ‘methods of barbarism’,⁵⁰ and the humanitarian and social reformer Emily Hobhouse, who had witnessed the concentration camps at first hand, lobbied vigorously for a humane intervention (Pakenham 2004).

The cost of the SAW had been immense; it had cost the British taxpayer £201,000,000. Out of a force of 448,435 officers and men, 5,774 were killed in action, 16,168 died of wounds or disease another 22,829 were wounded and 75,430 left South Africa as sick or wounded. In terms of animals, 400,346 mules and donkeys were ‘expended’ and a further 15,960 ‘lost on voyage’ (Spiers 1999). It was a war that had become increasingly unpopular with the British public, once again showing up the weaknesses in army structure and command.

4.9 The press and the public reaction to the SAW

The British press saw the South African War as ‘big news’. By 1900, different newspapers had fifty-eight reporters in South Africa, and daily circulation figures rose substantially, helped by an increasingly literate general population (Morgan 2002 :1). In her

⁵⁰ S.B. Spiers *Methods of Barbarism* (1977) is the definitive source for the scorched earth policy. As Nasson (1999) points out, the statistics from concentration-camp and other deaths are under continual revision.

treatise on newspapers and the SAW, Krebs highlights how the press, especially the tabloids, used the Mafeking celebrations to highlight the New Imperialism, with its overtones of masculinism (Krebs 2004). As in the earlier Crimean War numerous letters published in the newspapers came from soldiers in the SAW once again passed on by a family member. Most of the papers focussed on gallant deeds, highlighting the bravery and stoicism of the soldiers in the face of the enemy, leading with pro-war sentiments for example; *The Daily Mail* and *The Times*, although there was at least one anti-war newspaper, *The Manchester Guardian* (Hampton 2001). *The Daily Mail* saw its daily sales rise from half a million in 1899 to one million by the end of the SAW, claiming to stand for ‘the power and supremacy and the greatness of the British Empire’ (Riches et al 2009). Morgan (2002:16) makes the sobering point that media reporting in the SAW ‘had turned from a reporting of events into a jumble of fiction and fact, legend, symbolism, and stereotype’. There were those that used the press to try to raise important issues such as the letters sent to *The Northern Mail* (the forerunner of the current *Hartlepool Mail*) by Captain A. E. (Bertie) Morrison, a surgeon from Hartlepool who wrote many times urging a better medical service for the soldiers injured in South Africa.

The public hunger for details of the SAW was met by other more substantial publications, Harmsworth Brothers began producing a series of substantial volumes titled ‘With The Flag To Pretoria’ these provided illustrated accounts of the war on a month by month basis. For example volume one published in 1900 has 363 pages that cover the war between October 1899 to February 16th 1900; later volumes followed giving a similar amount of detail. The comics *Pluck*, and *The Boys’ Friend* featured contemporary stories of the SAW, carefully linking fact with fiction praising the bravery and heroism of the manly warrior figure that was the British soldier. *The Boys’ War News* was deliberately launched on 2nd December 1899 with a full page story entitled, ‘*How the Bugler Boy of the Gallant*

Gordons won the victory at Elands Laagte. Will he get the Victoria Cross?'. This manly warrior of the British army had finally reached his apotheosis at the end of the century.

Despite this publishing frenzy the public reaction to the SAW began to move along a continuum from the patriotic jingoism associated with the relief of the sieges to outright opposition to the war. As news of the way the war was being prosecuted through the setting up of concentration camps for Boer women and children opinion began to change. There was a 'Stop the War' committee under the stewardship of W. T. Stead, opposition from the Quakers and humanitarians like Emily Hobhouse. This opposition was not universal; there would be those who would not waver in their support of the Imperial Mission while in some quarters there was apathy: the SAW was not as important as was daily survival for some of the working class (Price 1972).

4.10 Capturing the war

The war came to an end on 31 May 1902 with the Boer defeat and accession to the British terms of surrender, a peace treaty was signed at Vereeniging. The terms of surrender included a sum of money (three million pounds), paid to the Boers in compensation for the loss of homesteads and livestock. The human cost of the conflict was a reflection that this had been 'total war' both soldiers and civilians had suffered greatly. This was a war that came to be perceived as 'the last of the colonial wars and the first of the modern wars' (Cuthbertson and Jeeves 1999:3). It introduced new ways of fighting like trench warfare, new weapons like the smokeless Mauser, and the use of heavy artillery (Pakenham 2004). The use of concentration camps for civilians also added a dimension to the war that, although not new in warfare, would have echoes in later conflicts such as the Nazi concentration camps of World War Two.

The thoughts, emotions, and ideas of ‘Tommy’ and his officers were captured throughout the SAW in their diaries and letters, the British soldier committed his SAW experience to paper. Each soldier’s journey through the SAW is set against a period of great social change that was taking place towards the end of the nineteenth century: new technologies were emerging and a sense of modernity and innovation promised much for the coming century. Soldiers in the SAW were caught up in a conflict that would be for some a proving ground of their imperial manhood already scripted for them as they grew from boys to men; for others, it would force them to examine their own role as men, not just fighting opposing men, but also taking the fight to civilians. This would be the cause of deep internal conflict as it appeared to contradict the manly warrior role. This attempt to measure up to the ideal of Victorian manliness is reflected in the SAW soldiers’ journey through his diaries and letters. It is the subject of the next three chapters as we follow ‘Tommy’ and his officers from joining up and fighting battles right through to burning farm houses and hunting down Boer commandos.

Fig viii. A Manly Warrior



Chapter 5: ‘Arms and the Man(ly)’

‘War’

.....The sentinel silently paces his round,
In the sleeping camp there is never a sound;
But the crack of a rifle rends the air,
And the bugle rings out an angry blare.
Then all in the darkness they rapidly form,
They charge the foe with a rush like a storm,
The fight is soon over, but, wounded and slain,
Many gallant young fellows lie stretched on the plain.
And many a mother will weep for her son
As she kneels on the bed when the day is done;
And many a maiden will sorrow in vain
For the lover she will never welcome again.

Paul Blake (from *The Boy's Own Paper* September 1881)

5.1 Introduction:

The Victorian soldier going off to the SAW be he regular or volunteer had been schooled in a socially prescribed set of codified behaviours that if performed properly would bestow hegemonic manly status. From children learning their patriotic alphabet at home to understanding the importance of displaying patriotism, bravery and heroism in the military service of his country the Victorian soldier was at the vanguard of all things manly. Hegemonic manly imagery had been generated through decades of exposure to socio-cultural agencies like the press, popular literature, church and family. The declaration of war against the Boer Republics by Britain saw an outpouring of patriotic fervour, generated in part by a largely populist press that appeared determined to create a critical mass of patriotism (Pakenham 2004). The call for men to join up for Queen and country was intricately and intimately connected with the performance of manliness, consequently the soldier going off to fight in the SAW was depicted as the ultimate exposition of manly behaviour embodying

the virility of the nation itself (Tosh 2005:193,194). The very act of war itself by a nation was the expression of that ideology that subscribed to the dominance of other nations through conflict as the ultimate expression of national virility. Making war is being presented as masculine and I agree with the sentiments of Mosse (1996) who comments that masculinity and war are intimately intertwined. The prominence of male sexual potency was being coalesced into framing a whole nation's virility. In the sub text of patriotism I argue that the real driver for nationalistic patriotic zeal was masculinity where men wanted to dominate other men.

However the reality of fighting on the South African veldt was to bring stark challenges to those men endeavouring to live up to the prescribed hegemonic imperial script of manliness, patriotism and bravery in combat. Their letters and diaries illustrate such tensions. This internalised manly script was now to be tested as soldiers faced up to the challenge of conflict and of performing manliness on the battlefield. The apparent surety of hegemonic manliness becomes increasingly scrutinised and tested. Fracture lines begin to emerge as the patriotic driver, the sense of duty, is tested to the extreme in situations where personal survival in the SAW becomes paramount and reliance and interaction with your soldier mates becomes more important than fighting for empire.

The SAW did however give energy and impetus to an emotionally driven patriotism that was to be performed on the battlefields of South Africa and judged according to socially prescribed bench marks of manliness. Themes of manliness such as patriotism (Siwundhla 1984) and bravery/heroism (Beynon 2002) reached their logical conclusion in soldiery and this chapter analyses the soldier's narratives in terms of manly imagery, patriotism and bravery. The consideration here of manly imagery details how men internalised the need to not only look physically manly but to act in a manly way. To look manly was to present an image that subscribed to a particular representation of physical fitness and strength. The

physically strong and fit looking man who embraced a regime of physical training in order to create a musculature was an admired figure, a reinforcement of a code of masculinity that strived to present this image at all times. This image also played a part in reinforcing racial stereotypes of a universal white Christian supremacy over all things and people who were 'other' (Beynon 2002:41-46). I agree here with Joanna Bourke (1999:176) who referring to World War One comments, 'Physical training was patriotic and chauvinistic: it prepared men's bodies for war...'

This provides an initial backdrop of the manly self and is followed by illustrating how the ideological meta narrative of hegemonic masculinity in terms of patriotism/duty and bravery is reflected through critical analysis of the soldiers' writings. This I argue reveals the contradictions and for some the dissonance experienced in endeavouring to match up to the prescribed manly ideal. This also corresponded with an increasing sense of the importance of those immediately around you, your soldier mates.

5.2 Manly Imagery

The muscular Christianity so lauded in the nineteenth century (Tosh 2005) established a long legacy of desirable physical features that linked manliness to military prowess (Bourke 1999: 138-140, 175-180). The self image of the SAW soldier is noticeably expressed in discernable ways through his diaries and letters; one was a critical examination of self image against the physical ideal of the brave warrior and another was emotionally focussed and that will be addressed in Chapter Seven. This section on manly imagery will consider how the SAW soldier related to his physical image in terms of his masculinity around markers of race, body mass and an idealised body type.

In terms of physical image the narratives show that small details of appearance were mulled over and reflected on. Lieutenant William Power for example aware of the impression

he wanted to project records how he did not like a photograph taken on the 3rd March 1900⁵¹: ‘Had our photographs taken today, they all came out very well, but I look like something like a cross between a nigger and a chinaman’. Seeing himself other than white would for Power have been a very negative image and one he would not be very happy with. This was indicative of a racist ideology that subordinated everything that did not have a white orientation, including image (Rutherford 1997).

The need to look the part of the manly warrior in every physical detail came down to body size for Lieutenant Gilmour, who complained in a letter to his fiancé May on the 3rd July 1900⁵²: ‘I have kept getting heavier and heavier...it is really dreadful. I look like the fat boy in Pickwick. I got a dreadful shock when I saw myself in a full length looking glass’. These comments are a challenge to both men’s ‘front of stage’ appearance (Goffman 1990) that is how the image that men present as their true selves and are a direct affront to their self perceptions of imperial manly images of a warriors physical perfection (Rutherford1997).

The idealised image of the warrior figure was not lost on Trooper Gilbert in his letter of October 21, 1901⁵³: ‘I saw the far famed “Fighting Fifth” Northumberland Fusiliers on the railway and they looked a brawny and suntanned lot. Truly they looked like fighters.’ The imagery of the physical perfection of fighting men reflects the Victorian obsession with the male physique as a stage set where warrior manliness could be played out (Beynon 2002). Continuing the same theme the Australian Major Dallimore shows how his opinion is coloured by physical appearance, in his diary entry 17th May 1900 when he decries the English Yeomanry for their physically weak countenances⁵⁴, ‘[The English Yeomanry]... are a different set of man from ours [Australians] they have never been accustomed to roughing it, [there are] too many men from the English towns among them’.

⁵¹ 3rd. March 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

⁵² Mileham, P. (1996) *Clearly My Duty – Jack Gilmour’s Letters*. Tuckwell Press. East Lothian.

⁵³ 21st. October 1901 letters Field, Kingsley (2007) ‘Soldier Boy’ New Holland Publishers London.

⁵⁴ 17th. May 1900, diary entry, PRO 1379.

The credence given to the link between physical appearance and soldierly performance could lead to unexpected disillusionment. When Trooper W. Hight comments on Major General Baden-Powell in a diary entry on the 6th August 1900, he remarks that the general was⁵⁵ ‘a tall man, sandy moustache freckled & not handsome. I was disappointed’. However, General Buller – who led the first, abortive attempt to control the Boers and win the SAW – was described as being ‘fifty nine, yet he looked fit enough to be fifty, bronzed, heavily moustached, the very archetype of the British warrior’ (Pakenham 2004 :113,114).

Manliness as physical strength and robust physique is embedded in the idea of the masculine man’s ‘appearance and performance’ (Roper 2005: 247,348). This resonates with the idea that we can consider the ‘body’s surface as a key marker of identity’ (Houlbrook 2007:161) and men’s (soldiers) bodies become identified with manliness (Bourke 1999, Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003). Lieutenant E. Gordon on the 8th October 1900 registers his admiration of colonial troops in the following words⁵⁶: ‘There came after, the Strathconas [Canadian volunteers], a magnificent lot... One man might have stepped out of [a] Bret Harte novel’⁵⁷. There is within the Victorian ideology of manliness implicit permission that allows men to comment on other men, either in terms of their appearance or their personal feelings towards them (Tosh 2005). It is deemed to be socially acceptable for men to do this promulgated from rules, codes of behaviour and social mores inherited from the existing masculine hegemony. This reflects a shift in the markers of manliness from a moral codification predicated on Christian duty to one based on ‘muscles, might, stoicism, endurance’ (SurrIDGE 2001:307).

As the SAW progressed the idealised image of the manly warrior who conquers all began to fracture, the flaws and weaknesses of his character and image are exposed in combat. The gap between expectations of what the manly warrior should be and the reality of

⁵⁵ 6th August 1900, diary entry, NAM 1992-07-99.

⁵⁶ 8th October 1900, diary entry, NAM 1991-09-84.

⁵⁷ The novels of Bret Harte were set in California and featured manly men with matching physiques.

what troops experience is constantly widening. As the tactics of the SAW progressively changed manly imperial soldiers faced increasing challenges to their self image. However the performance of manliness as patriotism and the sense of duty to Queen and country continued for the duration of the war. Patriotism as a hegemonic marker of manliness is now critically reflected in the following sub-section.

5.3 Patriotism/duty

‘...From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile’
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s Day’ (William Shakespeare from Henry V Act 4 scene iii).

The extract above from Shakespeare’s play ‘Henry V’ is synonymous with the great English sense of patriotism that came to characterise English patriotic behaviour and by dint of history their colonized territories for centuries to come. It is an iconic piece of literature and the essence of this manly patriotic sentiment is for many embedded in the national psyche (Dawson 2005, Needam 2004).

Patriotism and the concept of patriotic duty are directly implicated in the context of masculinity within the SAW. These are articulated not only in the soldiers’ writings in the process of joining up but also to their engagement in the conflict proper. The range of narrative commentary moves from wildly enthusiastic patriotic fervour, patriotic refrain, notions of a just imperial cause, inflamed bravado, and blind loyalty to Queen and country

through to feelings of despair, regret, and a realization that death in battle is possible. This section follows the soldier's narrative journey from the declaration of war to engagement in the South African conflict. The examples I have selected from the soldiers' writings for many, but not all, embody the idea that war is, 'an education in manliness' (Mosse 1996:115). Patriotic behaviour can be the vehicle through which attributes of manliness such as duty and sacrifice can be performed. I will present the section by commenting initially on the patriotic fervour for the SAW and its refrain followed by sharing the experience of soldiers from overseas colonies and finally the journey to and arrival in South Africa.

'Patriotic fervour and refrain'

The outbreak of the SAW was marked by a public sense of duty and patriotism combined with a reinvigorated imperialism that the public had embraced at the time (Price 1972). Embedded within this was a sense of righteous imperial destiny (Beynon 2002) which was grounded in notions of 'manliness and duty' in which being a real man, a true man, meant the sacrifice of self for the imperial mission (Tosh 2005:193). Often driven by a sense of patriotic duty a large body of men were exposed to warfare for the first time (Pakenham 2004) joined by seasoned veterans from the regular forces equally caught up in excitement at the prospect of war. Harry Phipps, a regular in the Borders Regiment, was one such soldier and he wrote in his diary⁵⁸, [the SAW having been declared on October 15th 1899, '...Just received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to proceed for Active Service. The troops are terrible excited...'. This sense of excitement and enthusiasm is shared by another regular Private Walter Mitton who writes in his diary⁵⁹:

New Years Day, and as I ride through Portsmouth Town on Mounted Orderly Duty, I am wondering what this mornings greetings will be, little dreaming that a great surprise awaited the Battery that day. However, when I received my letter and orders

⁵⁸ 18th. October 1899, diary entry, NAM 1983-02-15.

⁵⁹ 1st. January 1900, in Mitton, J.E. 'The Boer war – A Bombardier's Memoirs' (1996:2)

from the Headquarters Offices, early in the afternoon, prior to returning to Barracks, I held amongst them, the little Blue Envelope, which contained the long looked for news-**To sail at once for the Cape**⁶⁰ [original bold]

How I danced for joy, I must have appeared to have lost my senses as I hung tight to the letter, and especially so later when I galloped down the streets like lightning, taking no note of anybody or anything, so eager was I to reach Barracks and break tidings with my chums [...].

As his diary entry graphically details, Mitton found this to be more than an opportunity to tell his ‘chums’ about the imminent departure to the SAW. Doing so was the physical manifestation of the call to arms. The corporeal expression of his joy is predicated on the fact that he had found an opportunity to realise and connect with the manly virtue of fighting for his country. As a soldier, his anticipation of what lies ahead is barely containable as his emotions burst forth. Such, indeed, was his impatience to tell his fellow soldiers he had to ‘gallop down the streets’. On first reading, Mitton’s diary entry is a vivid demonstration of a passionate and manly patriotic fervour that embraces speed, haste and emotion. However, a closer scrutiny reveals much more of a challenge to the stereotypical style of manly reserve as typified by the British ‘stiff upper lip’. If playing to type, having read all the adventure books, heard all the patriotic songs and listened to all the sermons extolling a disciplined muscular Christianity, Mitton should have surely got off his horse and walked in a purposeful, dignified and stately manner to meet his colleagues and pass the news on to them (Rutherford 2005:12). Considered and conservative behaviour – the manly ideal of composure – is displaced by outright demonstrative passion underpinned by an almost fervent zeal to share his news. The British imperial mission that all real men must engage in is being embraced with a passionate fervour that might at face value seem to contradict the ‘stiff upper lip’ of imperial manliness (Heathorn 2004). He is impatient and he is ready to engage the enemy as a manly warrior. But this is not a solitary imperial mission,

⁶⁰ Landing point for disembarkation of British soldiers arriving in South Africa.

he has chums, who need to be told and as he tells them they too embrace the desire to do their patriotic duty and his diary entry continues:

It was an exciting moment when I broke the news. The Troops broke into a wild “Hurrah”- loud and long- and before that night was over, every man in the THIRTY-NINTH BATTERY, felt that KRUGER⁶¹ was now certain to be broke up, and the Boers defeated, since our “Dear Old Battery” was called upon to help her country [...] ⁶²all our Reservists had reported themselves not one person absent, and I thought it showed good feeling and patriotism, to see them readily respond to the call. Some of these reservists were discharged almost on sight, owing to being too big and stout for our horses, and otherwise medically unfit or unable to ride, and on the whole we had a jolly set of men who were quite willing to undergo the hardships of Campaign.

The Hurrah signalled and reinforced the camaraderie between troops. This evocation of male bonding is strongly rooted in military masculinity (Woodward 2004) and for Kummel (2002) male bonding in a war setting is perceived as an elevation of masculinity. There is a reinforcement of the togetherness of the soldiers through their shared euphoria (Kimmel 2000) and the intimacy of their bonding is reinforced by the prospect of war (Bourke 1999). Mitton seeks to strengthen the concept by putting the ‘THIRTY-NINTH BATTERY’ in bold letters. This soldier states unequivocally both literally and metaphorically that these are *his* chums and mates and this is his ‘THIRTY-NINTH BATTERY’. He even lays stress on the fact that the Reservists had reported in, using it to reinforce the overall depth of patriotic feeling. Not only were they leaping to their country’s defence, they were participating as patriotic men, as mates enveloped by an all-embracing imperial patriotic fervour and bound by manly virtue and solidarity. As Scheff (2006:86) suggests, this mateship closely parallels the emotional close ties of a family unit where, for example, nationalism and patriotic fervour can be intimately shared and nourished and performed together.

⁶¹ President Kruger of the Transvaal.

⁶² The Boer war – A Bombardier’s Memoirs (1996:3)

The unreserved 'blind' passion of Mitton is starkly contrasted with the diary of Private John Jackson of the Yorkshire Regiment as his diary reveals at the declaration of the war⁶³:

October 1899 – The Call to Arms 'SPECIAL, WAR.' SPECIAL, WAR. Such were the words that caught my ear one gloomy night in October 1899 as I wandered on my home through the streets of Chichester. I knew what the words meant to myself, and as well thousands more and those sad hearts that would be left to weep in solitude and anxiety, some dear one to mourn the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice so dear.

The undiluted exuberance of Mitton has vanished, leaving behind a more conservative, less 'gung ho' reflection on the news of the outbreak of the war in South Africa. There is no galloping, no intensity, no quickening of pace to share with mates, rather there is contemplation and foreboding; Jackson is wandering home, and the possibility of death in battle looms large in his thoughts. He continues in his diary:

As I walked on my way homeward, I pondered over the struggle just commencing in South Africa, where the Boer stood for his Independence and the Englishman his rights. The war cloud had risen the eve had been setting, the first shots exchanged. I knew before many days I would get the summons to go and help swell the ranks that fought for English honour and that before long I would have to leave all I held most dear to heart and soul. Alas for the circumstances that compels, at the call of duty a soldier must obey, he questions not the cause but cheerfully goes to uphold the honour of his Island birth. [...].'

The pace here is palpably slow: Jackson is not only walking, but ponders as he does so; his mood is redolent of contemplation and resignation to fate. The urgency with which Walter Mitton responded to the news of war becomes in Jackson's diary a melancholic narrative that suggests Jackson might indeed have been questioning the validity of the war. But in a final comment he well and truly nails his colours to the flag: 'Alas for the circumstances that

⁶³ October 1899, diary entry, accessed 13/06/09 www.greenhowards.org.uk/dox/John%20Jackson.pdf.

compels at the call of duty a soldier must obey, he questions not the cause but cheerfully goes to uphold the honour of his Island birth’.

What is striking here is that, whereas Mitton could ostensibly be characterised by his manly ‘blind passion’ for the imperial mission, Jackson has very different motivations. This is not a soldier driven by a warrior code that pitches men against men in bloody battle, as embedded in the phrase, ‘to the victor the spoils’; but rather a soldier embracing a need for manly duty and honourable behaviour that suited Victorian masculinity better (Tosh 2005). His use of the word ‘cheerfully’ denotes an evocative use of that most prized virtue of Victorian masculinity, stoicism (Beynon 2002) – even if this may entail the possible loss of his life in defence of his country’s honour. This exemplifies what Scheff (2006: 183-195) calls the tensions expressed by men who do not blindly embrace patriotism but rather see it as problematic, something that must be reconciled with yet deeper emotions.

It was not just regular soldiers who heeded the patriotic call. The sense of patriotism and the experience of patriotic duty were also keenly felt by the newly formed Volunteer and Yeomanry regiments, while the act of going to war was for some an integral part in their engagement with the great patriotic imperial adventure (Fletcher 2005:532). Notice the almost indecent haste to demonstrate patriotic pride in the following words of Private J.W. Milne, a Volunteer with the Gordon Highlanders⁶⁴:

‘[...] We were drilled at Wolmanhill Barracks and the links where we practised shooting, and in about a month we were ready for active service and every man was eager for a taste of real soldiering for we knew we were no longer a civilian soldier’.

Here Milne implicitly links ‘real men’ with ‘real soldiering’, making his experience and that of his comrades a welcome and novel adventure that they could enjoy together. Real soldiering for real men was to be tangible to the point that they could not only taste it, but

⁶⁴ 6th. January 1900, diary entry, accessed 10/11/05 on www.jwmilne.freesevers.com/.

desired to taste it quickly – even when doing so might often be bitter. I would argue here that Milne’s sentient appetite for war reflects the hegemonic ideal of the manly warrior and heroic soldier.

The thrill of embarking before the rest captures the essence of the manly creed that calls on its believers to be the best. Lieutenant (later Major) William S. Power, who had just joined the I.Y. in the County of Derbyshire, wrote;⁶⁵ [...] Derbyshire ought to be proud of her Yeomanry regiment being the first to embark for the front of any regiment in England [...]’ Power initially locates his pride in his regional affiliation, Derbyshire, and only after that in the national context of England, all of which I suggest reinforces the sense of kudos bestowed on whoever was first to the war, first to engage the enemy, and perhaps first to die in battle, to die a manly death. The actual campaign also offered an emotional locus where patriotism could be voiced with pride as Private T B Knights reflects on a visit by Lord Roberts to his regiment just prior to their return⁶⁶ to England he comments that Roberts⁶⁷:

...almost despaired of seeing us before the war was over. He thought it would be a pity that such a fine body showing such a manly & patriotic spirit should not have the opportunity of going in the final advance [of the war].

This was not quite the embodiment of the sentiment of real fighting in a war but it does help illustrate how notions of patriotic sentiments are present in the psyche of the soldiers.

‘Our colonial friends’

However with the possibility of a glorious warrior’s death in battle was not exclusive to troops from Britain their allies held similar feelings. Patriotism, duty and the need for an

⁶⁵ 2nd. February 1900 ,diary entry, NAM 83-03-12.

⁶⁶ Knights was with the City Imperial Volunteers (C.I.V.) who returned to England after only one year in South Africa, some arguing their return was premature based on their more privileged professional occupations in the City of London (Pakenham 2004).

⁶⁷ 12th. March 1900, diary entry, N.A.M. 9511-313-1.

overt manly statement to be made again both metaphorically and literally is captured in a letter home by Trooper Noble Jones of the Canadian Strathcona Horse⁶⁸:

To the Brethren of S.O.S. 1247

I do not know how to thank the number of old 1247⁶⁹ for their kindness to me and I am not going to try because I cannot find words to express my feelings but this I will try and do and that is to try and be worthy of the dependence you put in me for our God, Country and our Queen, will try and always be ready when and where duty calls I know already what the roar of artillery and the crack of maxims and small arms means and the flash of the bayonet that is one thing the foe cannot stand that is the bayonet we have no mean enemy to fight not only the enemy but the country is naturally a hard place to carry on a war [...].

In the opening part of his letter, Jones predicates what is to follow by suggesting, almost in a deliberately ambiguous style, that he is perhaps unable to speak freely out of emotion or that he considers silence to be the respectful, conventional thing to do. However, he continues:

[...]Well you tell the boys if from me if I fall it will be with my face to the fore fighting for freedom and old glory give my best wishes to all the boys tell them I cannot express my feelings, but I will do my best for old 1247 god helping me tell the boys I cannot use any big words so goodbye to all with best wishes to all.

Jones is now very explicitly saying he will not be a coward, not retreating, not showing weakness by turning his back away from the enemy. Yet the passage also invokes a sense that he does not want to disappoint his friends, there is a need to tell his friends back in Canada that he does not want to let them down not betray their trust.

⁶⁸ 22nd. January 1900, letter, C.L.I.P. accessed 22/7/07

<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=7323&warid=2&docid=1&collectionid=295> .

⁶⁹ This is possibly an Orange lodge of the Orange Order. The Orange Order founded in Ireland had strong associations with Protestantism and had many 'lodges' in Canada where members are called 'Brother'. There were similar types of pro-British Empire organisations which permeated Canadian society (Miller 1998).

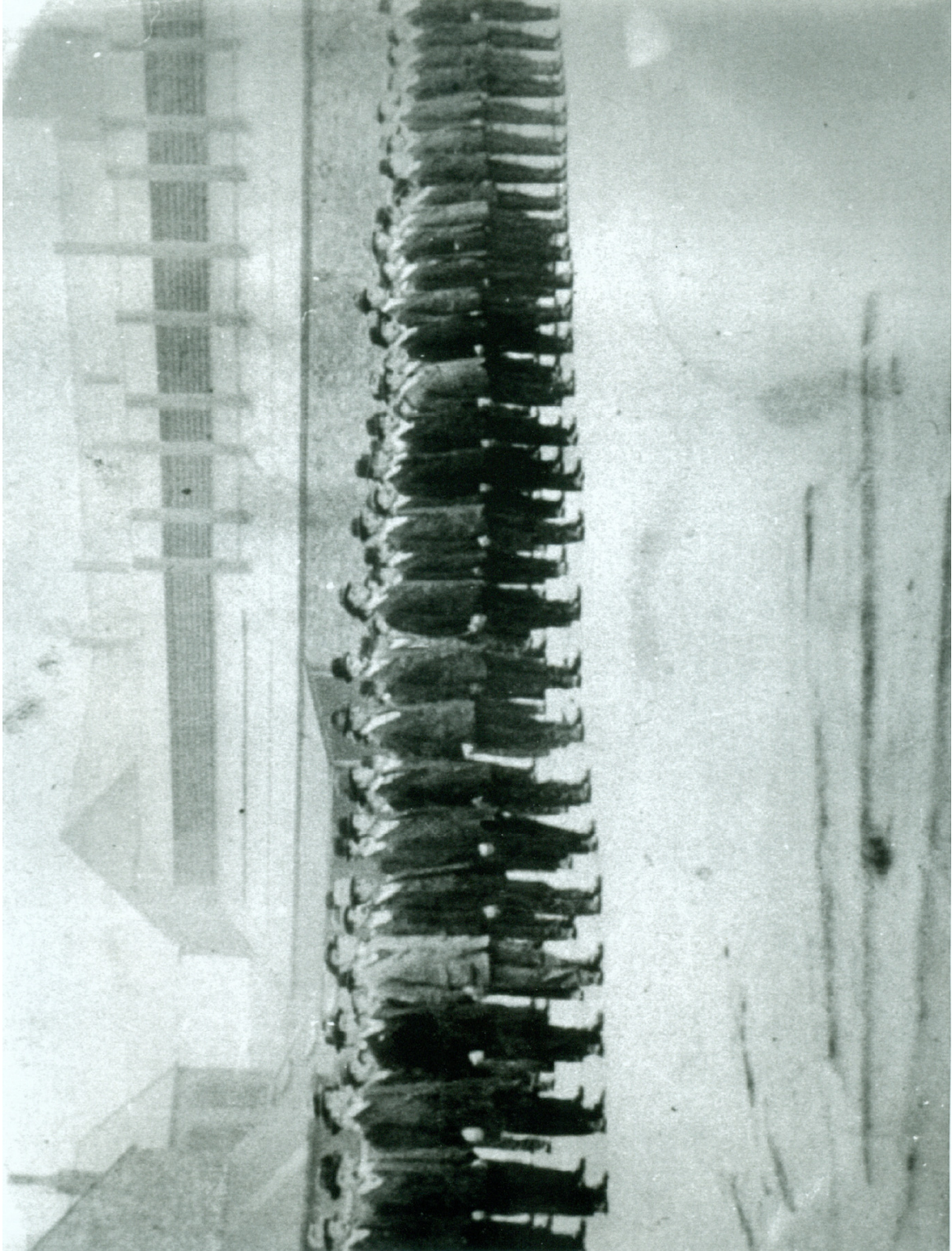
The same sentiment and similar manly imagery were also invoked by another Canadian, Trooper Rooke, also a member of the Canadian Strathconas Horse as he writes home and appears to rebuke his mother⁷⁰:

I received your letter last night, & was surprised to hear that you felt our leaving so much. Of course it is quite natural that you should be so, but I thought that you would have been glad at the same time. I don't think that you could have felt very proud of the family if, out of 8 grown sons, you could not send a representative to the front when your country needs them. I am not in the least sorry at having joined, in fact, I am only sorry I did not get away before.

In this letter Rooke is negotiating the tensions of doing his duty as he sees it and the deeply emotional ties of home. His apparent rebuke of his mother is set against the need to offer reassurance that the right thing has been done. Therefore at one and the same time the rebuke is mild and not harshly meant and is a mechanism that encourages and allows his mother to have pride in him as a patriotic soldier. It can also be interpreted as a means for Rooke to deal with his mother's emotion in a manly way. This is also an example of the implicit nature of the patriotism felt by the soldiers when he refers specifically to how his country needed him. His reference to 'eight grown sons' is also a steer towards his and the other sibling's independence as mature men cast physically adrift from maternal clutches but not emotionally. For many young soldiers like Rooke in the SAW and countless tens of thousands since in other wars their mother was not only the person they most wrote to but the one for which they had the greatest emotional bond (Rutherford 1997).

⁷⁰ 23rd February 1900, letter, C.L.I.P. accessed 22/7/07.
<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=261&warid=2&docid=1&collectionid=96> .

Fig ix. Answering the call



'On our way....!'

The final part of the preparations before actually engaging with the enemy in physical battle was the journey to and the arrival in South Africa. Trooper Joe Haywood, a volunteer in the Imperial Yeomanry writes⁷¹:

We halted [on the march to camp] and Colonel Roleston formed us into a squadron and made a short speech he said we were the first Imperial Yeomanry in the British history that had been known to march into an enemy's country bag and baggage and we gave three cheers for the Queen [...].

This was another military 'first', and it gave added cachet to the fact that not only had Haywood and his soldier mates volunteered – a manly thing to do – but also validated these volunteers and the newly formed Yeomanry as the equals of regular soldiers, something that truly established their credentials as manly warriors. This was important, since many regulars despised the volunteer troops as inferior soldiers (Bennett 1999).

The arrival in South Africa of another soldier, Canadian Trooper JC Walker, was reported in his local paper back in Canada and the headline marking the Dutton Advance of July 26th, 1900⁷² read, 'JC Walker is Ready to Do or Die For His Country'. The article was a letter Walker had sent to a friend dated April 16th. 1900: '...I think [Lord] Strathcona's influence will get us to the front line in time'. As with others already quoted, Walker's sense of haste appears to heighten a desire to engage with the enemy quickly, as only manly warriors doing their patriotic duty would. To give this sentiment of manly duty further credence, he adds, 'for it is an understood thing we have to *do* or *die* [...].' (my emphasis). There are emotional tensions around these statements where there is a perceived rush to engage the enemy. On face value, this suggests a manly desire to fight, but it could also reflect a desire for a quick engagement with the enemy and an equally quick exit. In the latter

⁷¹ 30th. March, 1900, diary entry, NAM 90-07-132.

⁷² 26th. July 1900, letter, C.L.I.P. accessed 22/7/07

<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=4794&warid=2&docid=1&collectionid=281> .

case the anxieties around the horror of taking part in battle could be assuaged by a quick exit from the war, allowing a soldier to maintain his manly honour while saving his life. This zeal for a quick encounter with the Boers may well be underpinned by a need to obscure the underlying emotion of fear. Walker, however, left the readership of the Dutton Advance in no doubt of his credentials as a manly soldier. To give this added savour, he writes further in the same letter:

This is a beautiful place here but strongly pro-Boer, as there are so many Dutch and Jews here. Our boys are getting into scraps with them, make them take their hats off and sing ‘God Save the Queen’ give them a good kicking and let them go [...].

This is Walker and the rest of the ‘boys’ creating trouble for the local Boer and Jewish population. By regaling readers back home with tales of how they give the local population a ‘good kicking’ and cruelly force them to recite the British national anthem, he depicts the Canadian troops as true patriots doing only what a patriotic man should do. The use of the phrase, ‘our boys’, further enhances the sense of a patriotic solidarity in mateship. Giving the locals a ‘good kicking’ also fulfils what Butler describes as ‘masculine’ performance of manliness, not only to each other but to all looking on (1990:25). Another example of this patriotic solidarity could be demonstrated at a military ‘smoke concert’, enjoyed by many of the soldiers. Captain Dallimore⁷³ recalls how patriotism was literally and metaphorically performed on stage and not just by the British:

...We were invited to a smoke concert last night in Beira...There were so many nationalities there...English, French and the boers. The Union Jack was hung up on stage and some immediately objected...one man got up on the stage and challenged anyone to take it down...A German got up and started to sing “The watch on the Rhine” which was promptly stopped by a chair cushion being thrown at him...another started to sing “We’ll hang old Kruger on a Weeping Willow Tree”...another jumped

⁷³ 6th. June 1900, diary entry, PRO 1379.

up and shouted “I protest I protest I am a Hollander”. A jug of water was thrown over him[...].

Being patriotic could also mean sacrificing your life for Queen and country. The following excerpt from an editorial in the *Dutton Advance* for March 1st 1900⁷⁴ gives a sense of where such notions of manly patriotism and making the ultimate sacrifice could be generated:

The Canadians fighting for freedom's cause in South Africa have had their first experience of a considerable engagement, and have suffered severely. No details of Sunday's battle have yet been received save the ghastly record of dead and wounded. But this record tells its own tale of hard and stubborn fighting - eight percent loss means that. There could have been no flinching on the part of our boys and when the details of the engagement have been received it will be found that the Canadians conducted themselves in such a manner as to be a credit to Canada and the Empire. The loss of life is deplorable; but that was to be expected. The Canadians enlisted for the purpose of fighting a brave and stubborn enemy and were prepared for the necessary casualties of war. Making railways and guarding stores were not employment to the taste of Canadian boys, and they longed to be at the front, in the fighting line. They have had their wish, and eighteen lie dead, while sixty more suffer in the hospitals. All Canada will regret the loss of life and will sympathize with the bereaved relatives of the boys who fell on the field of battle in a soldier's glorious death.

Here the use of the word ‘boys’ evokes in this instance almost a sense of innocence in relation to these young soldiers. They are at the cusp of boyhood/manhood as they die gloriously in battle, which in itself becomes the ultimate affirmation of their manliness and aligns itself with notions of going out as boys and dying as men. This excerpt also draws attention to the tension felt by men who want to be seen to be manly in battle but who fear that they may not be seen to be manly when they come to the test. I refer specifically to the

⁷⁴ 1st March 1900, letter, C.L.I.P. accessed 22/7/07
<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=4995&warid=2&docid=13&collectionid=281> .

sentence, ‘There could have been no flinching on the part of our boys [...]’, where there is a faint underlying menace about not flinching and not showing unmanly distress. The syntax is ambiguous, the soldiers are being applauded for not showing weakness and being manly while at the same time being commanded not to show fear and even if present the Dutton Advance was not going to report it! This captures the tensions inherent in the zeal to engage the enemy quickly, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between masculinity and being a patriotic soldier. Failure to establish this could have been embarrassing in the extreme and would have been the root cause of much shame (Goffman 2005).

To be manly was to be patriotic and to be patriotic was to be manly. This relationship was borne out in most of the narratives examined. Even when, as Private John Jackson illustrates, the onset of the SAW allowed for more reflective, less hurried contemplation, the overall inspiration of patriotic duty and manliness comes to the fore. Anticipating the bloody battles soon to come, the patriotic soldier recorded thoughts and emotions that ranged from pathos and bravado to an almost blind passion for the imperial cause. His desire for speed, whether to tell his soldier mates they were going to war or impatiently anticipating engaging in battle was a marked sentiment within the narratives. So too was the desire to face the enemy, face the front, do or die, and not let anyone down in responding to the call of the motherland. The need to perform as men should, and to have that performance validated was an overriding yearning for these soldiers. It was not enough just to be manly and do your patriotic duty; you needed to have someone bear witness to your actions, whether family, friends, fellow soldiers or the general public. It is the diaries and letters of ‘Tommy’ that allow him to express his manliness. The enormous pressure to be manly was translated into narratives that acted as buffers between the ‘Tommy’ and the culturally codified expectations of how men were meant to behave. I also suggest it was even more important that the individual soldier should perform well for his soldier mates. Family and friends at home

could judge you from afar, but those with whom you ate, slept, fought and suffered would and could be the final arbiters of your manly behaviour. From regulars to volunteers, the imminent war and the war itself were to be sites of demonstrable patriotism. In the context of the SAW, however, patriotism was much more than being manly; it was a patriotism cloaked with a sense of duty only a soldier in the service of Queen and country could achieve. Patriotism reverberates throughout the narratives, even before a shot was fired in anger.

Patriotism I would argue in the context of the SAW was initially the glue that binds the soldiers together particularly in the early stages of the conflict. But not all soldiers shared such patriotic bonds with the motherland and the following extract from a letter to his mother by Lieutenant JWC Kirk suggests there can be tensions embedded in hegemonic patriotism⁷⁵:

...A wretched 'Tommy' put his box of chocolates [sent to all the soldiers by Queen Victoria] on the fire saying he wouldn't receive any presents from Royalty. He was promptly taken in charge for insulting the Queen and is to be tried by General Court Martial, and will probably get a thick dose of hard labour.

The indignation of Kirk is equalled by the sense of outrage felt by 'Tommy' and although this performance of an anti hegemonic stance by the 'Tommy' is not the wholesale unravelling of patriotism in the SAW it is an indicator that hegemonic lines of distinction were being challenged. The imperial script of manliness was being tested and the following section considers the soldiers' narratives in terms of bravery as a paean to manliness while the SAW gains momentum and bloody battles ensue. The idealised standard of manliness was about to be realised and challenged in equal proportion under battlefield conditions.

⁷⁵ 2nd. February 1900, letters, NAM 1302-34-09.

Fig x. Forward into Battle



5.4 Bravery

‘Whatever you are, be brave, boys!

The liar’s a coward and slave boys!’

(from the *Boys Own Paper* n.d. [late nineteenth century])

[Spion Kop] ‘It was a most difficult job to climb & also allowing the wounded to be carried down, General Woodgate I passed going up, he was being carried down on a stretcher & those who could speak of the wounded were saying it was worse than a slaughter house up there, that did not improve our feelings but of course we had to go [...].’

(Lance Corporal Walter Putland⁷⁶)

In the previous sub section patriotic fervour was discussed and now I move to examine ‘Tommy’ as he faces the reality of bloody battle. Gone are the speed, haste and anticipation of engaging with the enemy, for now he comes face to face with the theatre of war, where his manly qualities are to be fully challenged. The great British public had an expectation of ‘Tommy’, that he would now risk his life in battle for the sake of the motherland (Gilmore 1990). Not only was the British soldier expected to fight, but he must do so well and bravely. The *Union Jack*, a publication widely available when ‘Tommy’ was growing up as a boy, exhorted him to be brave as he played, “Let your trust be in God; and in the right fight on - fight ever -and, if needful, die fighting”⁷⁷, so that when he eventually came to fight for the Empire, he would be as brave in adult battle as he had pretended to be in his childhood games (Hugill 1999). Far from home in South Africa, however, the British ‘Tommy’ was no longer playing those games. Walter Putland’s diary entry above encapsulates the real sense of battlefield carnage that ‘Tommy’ would face. He laconically records that duty still had to be done: ‘of course he had to go’ and climb to the top of Spion Kop, coming into direct contact with one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

⁷⁶ 23rd. January 1900, diary entry ,NAM 1981-07-18.

⁷⁷ ‘Union Jack’ 24th. October 1882 .

For many of the soldiers, the SAW was their first exposure to the harsh reality of battlefield conditions (Carver 2000, Pakenham 2004.), and their narratives capture at times a fiercely contrasting range of reactions from an idealised notion of bravery in war to excitement and anticipation of battle through to facing the reality of actual combat. This raises a number of questions: did Putland and other Tommies do their duty because they had to otherwise they may have faced charges of desertion? Or was it because they were brave and heroic ‘manly men’ who willingly embraced a ‘combat masculine warrior ethic’ (Higate 2003:205). Such an ethic included ‘being a real man, courage and endurance, aggression, heroic action and honour, death and sacrifice’ (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978:154). Another possibility in the tradition of the warrior ethic is that they did not want to let their soldier mates down. The heroic manly soldier heroes of British imperialism described by Dawson (2005) may well have been the stuff of myth and legend, but here on the veldt of South Africa, Walter Putland and his mates were to be tested in real life and death encounters with the Boers. They recorded in diaries and letters the reality of their battles and their ideas of bravery and heroism. Ultimately, they put to the test the idea that war was indeed, ‘an invitation to manliness’ (Mosse 1996:69,166). This section considers how bravery was idealised, the desire to fight and be brave and finally the reality of combat.

‘...as brave a little chap as ever lived...’

The idealized Victorian notion of bravery would suggest that it would be inherent in the actions of all Tommys in war, as exemplified in Private Harry Phipps’s recording of an engagement with the enemy⁷⁸; ‘Our company’s drummer – as brave a little chap that ever lived – was killed [...] One minute he was laughing at a shell that came so near it covered him with dirt, the next dying with a bullet in his lungs [...].

⁷⁸ 15th. December 1899, diary entry, NAM 1983-02-15.

Leading the charge while fighting the Boers in 1902, a certain Captain Richard Challoner is reported to have roused his men by shouting, 'Play the game', just before he was killed by an enemy bullet (Downes 2005). This may not be proof of the impact early exposure to such literature had on British soldiers, but it is suggestive for all that (Fletcher 2005).

Bravery was recognised as a prescribed and codified set of behaviours in battle. It included precepts such as facing the enemy to the front, never giving way, being honourable in victory (Mangan and Walvin 1987). Trooper Rooke on the 23 February 1900⁷⁹ writes:

All I hope is that we get there in time to have a finger in the pie. There is one thing, dear mother, if we do get there, & get snowed under, I hope it will be as a soldier should fall, with his face to the front

Here again we find an evocation of 'facing the front'. Rooke qualifies this term by suggesting that such an event would only happen if the army got 'snowed under'; in other words the actions of an overwhelming enemy force would lead to his death. It would be unmanly to die otherwise, and the iconography of making the ultimate sacrifice as a warrior is only eclipsed by the fact that it is his mother to whom he is writing. Kipling, in his poem, 'The young British Soldier' (v.9, 1892) captures some of the sentiment that has been embraced by Trooper Jones, but not perhaps what the trooper really wants to say:

When first under fire an' your'e wishful to duck
Don't look nor take 'eed at the man that is struck
Be thankful you're livin', and trust to your luck
And march to your front like a soldier
Front, front like a soldier
So-oldier of the Queen!

Kipling was in no doubt which way a soldier should face and Trooper Jones appears to embrace the same sentiment with the caveat that it might suit him to appear to his mother

⁷⁹ 23rd. February 1900, letters, CLIP accessed 17/5/2007.

as brave rather than reveal any fears he has. This masking of emotional feelings was to deny any exposure of weakness to the social audience most important to the soldier: his family and his soldier mates (Scheff 2006:35-38). What is most ironic about such sentiments is that in the SAW most of the troops did not die as warriors in battle, but succumbed ignominiously to disease, particularly typhoid, which together with other diseases accounted for approximately seventy five per cent of all British soldiers' deaths (Pretorious 1998, Carver 2000). However, as these narratives demonstrate, the chance to become a patriotic warrior (Dawson 2005, Harstock 1984:199,200;) and thereby realise and validate claims to manliness and a man's readiness to die for the Empire was freely and at times, passionately subscribed to (Rutherford 1997). Bravery in battle and dying gloriously as a warrior hero became the touchstone and nirvana of all things manly (Downes 2005:12).

'I don't want a bare assed medal I want a bar'

Even before the battle took place, some soldiers were setting down their markers for bravery by displaying bravado through self confident swaggering, and showing a determination to be brave. For example Private H. J. Lewis tells his friend Jack back home in a letter⁸⁰; 'I am ashamed to confess that I have not yet had an interview with an armed Boer [...] and Private George Moody writes to his friend Mrs. Ritter that⁸¹; 'We [his regiment] are hoping the Boers will not surrender till we have had a shot at them [...]'. Both these soldiers are expressing their desire to fight in order to validate their manliness. For Trooper Noble Jones it was his impatient desire not only to get a service medal, but a 'bar' on that medal which would signify he had been involved in a genuine battle engagement; in a letter home he wrote⁸², 'I don't want a bare assed medal I want a bar...'. The sentiments these soldiers expressed seem designed to reassure the readers of their letters that they possessed warrior

⁸⁰ 12th. August 1900, letter, NAM, 1999-12-125.

⁸¹ 20th. May 1900, letter, P.R.O.N.I., D.1454/1/24.

⁸² 10th. February 1900, letter, CLIP. accessed 17/5/2007

<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=7330&warid=2&docid=1&collectionid=295> .

credentials. Such sentiments reflect the pressure put on many soldiers to conform to the idealised standard of brave manliness expected from them as fighters in the SAW (Mangan and Walvin 1987). It has been suggested that the more closely men are associated with war and the more they take part in warlike pursuits, the more likely are they to engage in bravado as a means to display their manliness (Coltrane 1992:101,103). The narratives of the men intimate these very attributes. This reflects Scheff's (2006:165,166) notion that the more vulnerable and less secure in his manliness a soldier feels, the more he experiences the need to compensate for that by taking part in violence and aggression.

If engaging in bloody battle does indeed provide the elusive but greatly desired promise of glory through heroic actions in combat (Braudy 2003:49, Frank 1991:99, Mosse 1996:111) the soldiers' narratives will offer insight into that world of bravery in war. For some men, it is an opportunity to make a powerful statement about their suitability as warriors in an arena which promotes bravery in combat, by giving men medals for courage or mentioning exceptional valour in despatches. Bravery displayed on the battlefield is part of a very explicit code of warrior conduct which plays out as the hegemonic masculinity of the individual soldier. Consideration of the 'playing out' and performance of masculinity (Butler 1990, 1993) as bravery on the battlefield is integral to an analysis of the soldiers' narratives.

The diaries and letters from the SAW articulate the immense variety of battlefield experience that 'Tommy' went through. As their narratives suggest, for many soldiers the requisite manly sentiments of bravery and heroism became more confused throughout their time in South Africa. From the initial explosion of patriotic manliness examined previously to the bravado with which he expressed his urge to fight, 'Tommy' exposes the totality of his feelings when going into battle. These feelings range from nervous excitement and anticipation to the intense reality of combat that culminates in the taking of human life.

Underpinning all of these actions was the need to be seen out on the battlefield, performing one's duty bravely. Above all, there was enormous pressure that a soldier should not lose face by unworthy actions which would embarrass him before his comrades. Mayhem and masculinity entwine in the following analysis, in which bravery is shown to take many guises. The emotions and behaviours displayed by soldiers in battle were judged to be indicative of their masculinity and were accorded status and kudos by their fellows, commensurate with the degree of bravery shown. The braver a man's actions on the battlefield, the manlier he became in the eyes of his comrades, and the closer they fit the imperial manly 'brief'.

'All went crack, crack, whizzy, whizzy'

As the soldiers begin to engage in battles proper, soldiers' narratives vividly recall the reality of what they were experiencing. For example, Sergeant Harry Facer's details of his involvement in the battle of Elandslaagte read as follows⁸³:

[...] The fight commenced by our field Batteries opening fire on a hill to our left about 4,500 yards from a larger conical hill where the enemy were strongly entrenched. The infantry still advanced in a good skirmishing formation & had not gone far before the Boers guns opened fire on us & so the rifle fire commenced until the bullets began to fall round like rain. Our men began to fall but still the lines advanced.

Corporal G.S. Botwright captures similar imagery when he writes⁸⁴:

[...]From the ant heaps we rushed through the mealies [maze plants] and here the bullets whistled like wind through the forest [...] No time was lost and with fixed bayonets we climbed up and took the massive hill of Vaal Krantz. On getting to the summit our helmets were placed on the point of the bayonets and a ringing cheer rent the air [...].

⁸³ 21st. October 1899, diary entry, NAM, 1998-06-178-2.

⁸⁴ 5th. February 1900, diary entry, NAM 2005-07-773-(12).

In both these extracts, the metaphor of bullets as rain and wind not only serves to give substance to ‘Tommy’s sensation of being caught in a storm of rifle fire but transforms deadly lead into something natural, almost benign, even though he find himself in a very dangerous place. The way the soldiers describe the sheer ferocity of the firepower directed towards them suggests that even to continue moving forward through this wave of potentially lethal bullets was in itself an act of bravery and heroism when in fact an instinct for self preservation might have joined with common sense to drive a man to turn tail and run away. This again begs the questions of whether bravery in battle is simply the result of following orders and the fear of disciplinary action or something inspired by a warrior code that is rooted in a codified set of behaviours that materialises as bravery, or maybe simply the most efficient way of behaving in battle and staying alive. This certainly could be in the mind of Corporal HG Lawrence when he writes⁸⁵, ‘All went crack, crack, whizzy, whizzy, bullets began flying and pinging about, *we thought we were in for it* [...] our drummer blew the charge and we took our hill [...]’ (my emphasis). He recognises that the intensity of the firepower unleashed against them is potentially fatal, and this discernable shift in his attitude towards the battle comes to mind, if fleetingly, just as the call to charge the hill is made, interrupting a flight or fight decision. This suggests that ‘Tommy’ in the heat of battle could make any number of decisions guided by a range of emotions and thoughts from fear, instinct to stay alive, wanting to stay with his mates to perhaps acting out the warrior code of bravery. Alternatively he could have been in fear of being shot by his own soldiers for desertion⁸⁶.

Soldiers engage with enemy combatants and will kill them, this is what soldiers do. If they do so in a brave way then this is not only performing manliness but reinforcing manliness as the hegemonic masculinity for soldiery (Butler1990, 1993; Connell 1995). As

⁸⁵ 21st. November 1899, diary entry, NAM 2002-08-144-3.

⁸⁶ In World War Two the Russian Army used ‘blocking units’ to prevent this happening. A front line regiment would therefore face the enemy ahead and their own army behind with orders to shoot any one who turned back (Merridale 2005:137,138).

soldiers, men set out to impress other soldiers so that their own sense of warrior manliness is validated. In a slightly different evocation of bravery in battle, Lieutenant C.A. Cumming comments⁸⁷; ‘For about an hour the bullets were whizzing about our heads, but the men kept very cool [...]’. This is interesting from two perspectives. First Cummings is an officer, although he comments on the saturation of bullets surrounding him and his men, he speaks only of *their* bravery by stating that they ‘kept very cool’. Second, it seems reasonable to assume that when Cummings speaks in this way he believes that, as an officer, his own bravery is a ‘given’, an unquestionable virtue that fulfils all the criteria of the well schooled manly warrior of his class (Dawson 2005). This is one of the first intimations that ‘Tommy’ and his commanding officers might not see the war through quite the same lens. This is examined in the data chapters when ‘Tommy’ details in his narratives how in fact at times his officers are perceived as not brave in battle. As this thesis further develops, the ‘Tommy’/officer schism will become increasingly an ingredient of the soldier’s narratives. It is, however, ‘Tommy’ who speaks openly of what bravery in combat really means. Private Walter Abbot gets a bloodied view of the battle scene at Spion Kop⁸⁸; ‘The firing at daybreak was horrific [...] it was the horribliest sight I ever hope to witness [...] the sight of the wounded was horrible. Some walking with toes and arms off [...]’; reinforces the fact that all action and behaviour on the field, whether brave or not, takes place against a backdrop of bloody carnage. Private soldiers’ narratives illuminate how they acted in a war which had been predicated on a contradiction: that it was to be a gentleman’s war performed under gentlemanly rules of engagement which often bore no relation to the bloody reality (Mangan and Walvin 1987). Deneys Reitz, a Boer fighter and later South African politician also wrote in his memoirs about the battle of Spion Kop, where the carnage was immense and the loss of life was great:

⁸⁷ 7th. January 1900, diary entry, P.R.O. 1403.

⁸⁸ 24th. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1992-08-335.

The Boer guns in particular had wrought terrible havoc and some of the bodies were shockingly mutilated, there must have been six hundred dead men on this strip of earth, and there cannot have been many battlefields where there was such an accumulation of horrors within so small a compass (Reitz 2009[1929]: 79, 80).

It was against this background that Lance Corporal Walter Putland made these observations as he fought in the battle of Spion Kop⁸⁹:

[...] it was a most difficult job to climb [Spion Kop] and also allowing the wounded to be carried down [...] those who could speak [...] [were] saying it was worse than a slaughterhouse up there, that did not improve our feelings but of course we had to go [...] we were greeted by a shower of bullets [...] the dead wounded and dying was awful and the groaning was sickening [...] I did not like the job, but I had to do it [...] so I said a prayer to myself [...].

In such circumstances – or those described by Reitz – the emotional pressure driving Putland to avoid carrying out this order must have been enormous. The bloody carnage at Spion Kop was on a relatively small piece of land, and he could not have escaped witnessing it. The fact that he did obey his orders despite such trepidation bears witness to the coercive power of the manly warrior code that demanded that soldiers should be not only brave but be seen to be brave while performing his duty. Had Putland disobeyed his orders in front of his mates, it would have meant a personal catastrophe: that most humiliating of circumstances for a soldier, to be branded a coward in battle (Spiers 1999). This would have been a judgement passed on him by his soldier mates, possibly condemning him to face unbearable shame (Goffman 1990, Scheff 2006). There were, however, instances when cowardly behaviour on the battlefield was witnessed by other soldiers. Private Harry Phipps relates such an episode⁹⁰ at the Battle of Colenso. He details how another regiment who were in the ‘firing line’ (first line of soldiers to attack the Boers) of the battle had wilted under fire and was ‘...cuddled up

⁸⁹ 23rd. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1981-07-18.

⁹⁰ 20th. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-02-15.

behind a small hill [...].’ After some intervention by Phipps and his unit Phipps’s officers took control and issued orders:

[...] Our men indignantly told them what they thought of their action, [and] after a lot of persuasion (one way or another) they commenced to advance like a pack of frightened sheep. [...].

In this instance, the soldiers of the firing line have been well and truly marked out as cowards. They have not performed as ordered and have broken faith with the code of the brave warrior and personified by the ‘character contest’ of manliness as previously mentioned in chapter two (Goffman 2005:229). In this case the character contest had been well and truly won by Phipps and his soldier mates. The bravery demonstrated by Phipps and his mates is fashioned from two things: obedience to their officers’ orders, and a display of warrior manliness under the gaze of other soldiers in the field (Meyer 2004). They have responded to the virtue of respectful deference to military authority while displaying heroism befitting soldiers in battle (Dawson 2005).

In another setting Captain P. H. Normand recalls his wounding, as detailed to his father⁹¹:

My dear father [...] it was at [the battle of] Elandslaagte I got my wound. We had a splendid fight charging an almost impregnable position and driving out the Boers [...] It was a grand sight going up the hill and we cheered all the way up [...].

In the first instance, Normand tells his father of his wound and at once sets the tone of his letter: he must be a very brave soldier, wearing his injuries like battlefield honours. The Boer position he was attacking presented a tough challenge, with the Boers fighting splendidly, wounded though he was, Normand still battled bravely on. Here is a son writing to his father about his brave actions in battle, and his letter bears all the hallmarks of nineteenth century

⁹¹ 27th. October 1899, letter NAM, 1982-02-207.

adventure fiction for ‘manly boys’, as found in the stirring stories of G.H. Henty, Rudyard Kipling, Arthur Conan Doyle, and many others.

If, as Michael Roper (2005) suggests, heroic manliness was finally buried on the fields of Flanders in World War One, I would argue that the SAW began to dig its grave mirrored in the carnage that was Spion Kop. In both these conflicts the battlefield became a bloody metaphor for a misshapen and disfigured manliness, in which the frailties inherent in men’s masculinity were exposed. Was this then the beginning of the end of the warrior code of behaviour in battle?

Bravery on the battlefield now becomes deformed into something else, and the steady deconstruction of the manly warrior code continues as Corporal [First name unknown speculatively from the North Lancashire Regiment] Machin diary entry for Spion Kop reveals⁹²:

Twelve hours of so terrible an experience had a strange effect on men. Some were dazed and battle struck, incapable of clear understanding. Some as if drunk, all of them longing for water and food [...] 1500 men dead and dying are a grim sight on a wide battle field, but heaped in a confined space was terrible and the groans of the dying raising in one long drone was terrible to hear [...] Men whose nerves had been slated [destroyed] to the dash of the big guns and the roar of the maxims and the rattle of the Mauser found new horror in the Pom Pom⁹³ [...].

Corporal Machin and his mates on Spion Kop had been subjected to a most vicious and sustained bloody assault by the Boers. Hundreds of their colleagues lay close by, dying or dead, and this was for many of them the end of their adventurous journey into manliness (Dawson 2005). Some died, others still lived and all had been exposed to murderous violence. Many of these men who had joined up to fight in South Africa as a patriotic and

⁹² 24th January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1984-04-124.

⁹³ Pom Poms refer to Vickers-Maxim automatic quick firing guns which could achieve a firing rate of ten one pound shells every couple of seconds and has a range of four thousand yards. The Boers had prior to the SAW bought the guns from the British.

Fig xi. Spion Kop



manly act now found themselves on a hillside called Spion Kop where their very presence and engagement in the fighting were enough to declare them to be heroes. Bravery in battle demanded a heavy price, and even the award of a sought-after medal for heroic conduct proved no substitute for the loss of an arm, a leg or even a life (Bourke 2000). As the British soldiers of Spion Kop (Fig xi, page 159) watched their lifeblood drain away across the battlefield, so did the mirage that had been presented as manly bravery (Nasson 1999). The slaughter at Spion Kop was I argue a pivotal moment when notions of how to bravely 'play the game' in a fair and manly fashion seeped into the hillside, mixing with the bodies of the dead. Those soldiers who were left alive stood or lay in a confused post-battle scene, surrounded as they were by the deathly groans of fallen comrades. This is not to say that brave actions did not happen at Spion Kop. Such was the calamitous situation perhaps actions that were described as being brave were in fact not of any particular register of bravery but rather an instinctual response for survival. Gone is the brave warrior hero, inspired in early life by the penny dreadfuls of childhood and a supporting literature that brimmed with brave soldiers fighting just causes. Here on a hill top in South Africa notions of codes of behaviour that called for brave deeds by brave soldiers were to be replaced by an overriding sense of soldiers basically trying to survive.

One soldier who did not survive combat was Lieutenant George Dennis who was killed in action on 6 January 1900, and this letter was subsequently written to his father by the father of a fellow serving officer⁹⁴:

My Dear Dennis

[...] James and Maxwell saw him mount the hill, although the air was full of molten lead, and walk as if he were out for an airing. They marvelled at the charmed life he seemed blessed with, and were astounded at his temerity even scorning to creep. 'He

⁹⁴ 31st. August 1900, letter attributed to Ernest Fanner or Fenner and located with the papers of Dennis NAM 2004-03-63.

was one of the best boys I have ever met' said Maxwell 'and he died as few heroes and fewer men could hope to do' [...].

This correspondence to a dead soldier's father served a number of purposes, one of which was for it to be treated as a genuine letter of condolence. However, underpinning it is a heavily sanitized version of warrior manliness, where bravery is manipulated for the consumption of a British home audience that enthusiastically embraces the warrior ethic (Higate 2003:205). Making the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield for Queen and country has been sanitized to such a degree that not only is Dennis reported to have died a heroic manly death (Braudy 2003), but we are told that very few other men could ever emulate him (see Appendix Five). Sacrifice in battle has been elevated to a level where all true heroes long for immortality of the spirit as their ultimate ambition. Ordinary human existence is subordinated to a higher level of being; the existence of the manly hero who has fallen gloriously in battle and is now dead and in an afterlife befitting only the bravest.

Manliness and all its permutations in the SAW created a revival of the warrior ideal by taking the moral high ground; but the savage and bloody encounters of combat engagement have brought home the reality of fighting in a war, especially to those troops who find themselves in combat for the first time. For many of these men, their battlefield experiences will not only shape their masculinity as the conflict continues but will also challenge the core fabric of the warrior code itself. Manliness, that is to say, being brave and fulfilling the code of heroic conduct, is increasingly challenged, despite the ways in which combat is sanitized. In the diary narratives, one of the most telling changes in attitudes to bravery in the SAW can be seen in letters sent by Canadian Trooper Noble John Jones. In his letter of January 22 1900 – already quoted – he brags that he is in South Africa 'for our God, Country and our Queen [...] you tell the boys from me if I fall it will be with my face to the fore fighting for freedom and old glory [...]'. But the bragging is replaced by an increasing

disillusionment with the imperial adventure and a more cynical consideration of self preservation. In a letter written some two months later, he tells his mother how things have changed. Noble's initial enthusiastic bravado and his eagerness to win a medal have evaporated. As his exposure to battlefield combat increases, there is a distinct hardening of his self-awareness as a soldier; the soft underbelly of bravado is gradually and brutally replaced by the sensibilities of a battle-hardened and savvy fighter. His original desire to cling to the manly warrior code shrinks as his tour of duty in South Africa continues. In a relatively short time from his earlier manly warrior pronouncements, he writes to his mother⁹⁵:

[...] If any of the boys around there ever think of coming out here discourage the idea knock it out of their head in some way with a club for it is no snap it is alright when it is over and a soldier is home once more to get all the glory he can but when you are out in the field and going into a fight and don't know whether you are going to get [killed] or not you don't feel so gay [...].

In this letter, all pretension to bravado or thought of fighting or aspiration to heroism have vanished, crushed to nothingness between regret for finding himself in South Africa and fear of dying in combat. His plea has now changed; beseeching his mother that no-one else should join him. Noble Jones has now entered a world of self-doubt and recrimination, a place where manly behaviour in battle and the winning of medals are no longer his priorities: his great hope now is to save his own life. However even by suggesting that no more of his Canadian friends come over to South Africa to fight he is in his way throwing down the gauntlet and challenging the prevailing notions of bravery. By encouraging his fellow Canadians to stay at home he is in effect taking an anti-hegemonic position which in its own way could be perceived as being brave in its own right. To challenge the norms and expectations surrounding soldiers fighting in South Africa would not have been easy for Noble Jones to

⁹⁵ 8th. April 1900, letter, C.L.I.P. accessed 17/5/2007
<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=7193&warid=2&docid=1&collectionid=295> .

share with his mother whom originally he had wanted so much to impress with his joining up to fight.

This next letter displays Noble Jones ever diminishing appetite for combat as he writes to his sister Nellie⁹⁶:

17th April 1900. I hope I get home as well & sound as I am at present I will ask no more they can keep all the glory and give me a whole skin I have come through some pretty hot fires & one of the biggest fights of the campaign & that was the scrap where old Crouje [Cronje⁹⁷] surrendered we had a hard time of it [...].

To keep his skin whole and to be able to return in the end to Canada is now Noble Jones's *raison d'être*; like many of his soldier mates who fought alongside him, the promise of heroic and manly encounters with the enemy in battle became little more than a mirage, a shadow over the South African veldt. Now, the longing to stay alive and keep your soldier mates alive outstrips any desire to achieve manly warrior status. The mask of manliness is fragmented a piece at a time, and the shame of appearing weak is replaced by an increasing desire just to survive.

The performance of bravery in war becomes less a realisation of ideological drivers like patriotism and fighting for Queen and country and more rooted in the immediacy of who you are fighting with. It is your soldier mates that become the sole arbiters of your actions, it is to them that loyalty is owed and given. They will be the judges of your manliness and the interdependence of soldier mates in the theatre of war supersedes abstract notions of fighting for a greater good.

⁹⁶ 17th. April 1900, letter, C.L.I.P. accessed 17/5/2007

<http://www.canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=7197&warid=2&docid=1&collectionid=295> .

⁹⁷ This refers to General Piet Cronje's surrender at the battle of Paardeberg. The Canadian troops played a major role in this battle (Miller 1998).

5.6 Summary

Manly image, patriotic fervour and bravery were all intertwined in the ideal of the hegemonic imperial soldier. They were constructed and reinforced by decades of socio cultural influence, giving energy to an emotional patriotic fervour and was performed on the battlefield in many brave actions. The narratives of the soldiers show that they formed a yardstick of expected behaviour against which they could hold themselves and others. These three elements are played out in each individual soldier's response as they are put to the test in the South African conflict. It is apparent from the narratives that as the campaign progressed the reality for many men was at odds with this hegemonic imperial manly script, ideas of the manly ideal become fractured as the performative weaknesses of both officers and fellow soldiers become apparent. However what was also apparent was the realisation that the reasons why they were fighting in South Africa became secondary to the immediacy of the relationship between soldier mates. The camaraderie between soldiers is paramount and the following chapter examines this in more detail.

Fig xii. Soldier Mates

Privates Weir, Tweedie, Beecher and Cochran



Chapter 6

Men at Close Quarters: Chums, mates, brother officers and killing Boers

‘Comrades, Comrades.’

Comrades, pour the wine to-night
For the parting is with dawn!
Oh, the clink of cups together,
With the daylight coming on!
Greet the morn
With a double horn,
When strong men drink together!

Comrades, gird your swords to-night,
For the battle is with dawn!
Oh, the clash of shields together,
With the triumph coming on!
Greet the foe,
And lay him low,
When strong men fight together!

Comrades, give a cheer to-night,
For the dying is with dawn!
Oh, to meet the stars together,
With the silence coming on!
Greet the end
As a friend a friend,
When strong men die together!

Richard Hovey – 1864-1900

6.1 Introduction:

In order to operate as a strong military force it is essential for strong bonds to be developed within fighting units (Adelman 2007). The Victorian recruit as officer or ‘Tommy’ had been schooled throughout his formative years in a culture steeped in the benefit of

developing a team spirit with those other males around him (Beynon 2002). This was promoted through diverse activities such as sports, encouraging the playing of team games and activities and much popular culture such as songs, stories, comics or indeed the poem above (Paris 2000, Collini 2007:100). The poem above is an illustration of how that ideology pervaded popular culture, supporting the concept that strong bonds and shared actions are the key stone of the strong manly warrior in a 'bonded homosocial team' (Woodward and Winter 2004:162). Yet war is more than a series of engagements, a simple list of battles won and lost. It is about the military being able to bring together a mass movement of men for a specific purpose, in a disciplined force where collective controlled violence is a necessary function for success. Between combat engagements, soldiers have to live together, sleeping, eating and working in close confinement, and it is equally important that soldiers conduct themselves with discipline and order in these situations. In the SAW the social settings that the soldiers found themselves in differed across regiments both in action and in time and place. For some there was time spent marching across miles of the country together to prepare for set battles, others found themselves with long periods of combat inactivity pinned down with each other in one of the three sieges of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith,(the longest lasting for 7 months) while other soldiers were encamped waiting for orders to follow Boer Commando Units, farm burning and transporting civilians into concentration camps. Throughout these periods soldiers used the time to critically reflect on their situation and comment on the actions of others, recording their thoughts in diaries and letters.

The comradeship experienced by the SAW soldier and recorded in their letters and diaries giving detail to every day events show the importance of mateship, the value given to 'chums' and 'chaps' or to use a more global term camaraderie. Military masculinity is very much predicated on camaraderie, its operation and manifestation is hugely important in times of war (Peniston-Bird 2003:32). There is also an expectation that those around the SAW

soldier will adhere to the model of 'manliness' and the importance this holds for him and his fellows (Hallisgrimsdottir and Adams 2004:277). Part of living up to this standard of manliness is the outward performance and display both to self and comrades of this accepted and expected behaviour. Diaries and letters are quick to point out if a fellow soldier or officer does not live up to the expectation of this close soldier community, and there is a continued underlying concern that each soldier must match up to the 'manly script' (Kimmel 1994:487).

This chapter will critically examine the soldier's writings to analyse how this ideal of comradeship was played out in the varying social and combat situations, identifying how the soldiers were able to express these most intimate of feelings of friendship for each other. It will also explore how this close confinement gave the soldiers opportunity to judge each other's behaviour against their individual expectations of both 'Tommy' and his officers. Their writings can reflect both their affection for those around them and also disappointment when there is an inconsistency between their own ideas of how manly soldiers should behave and the reality that faces them. How soldiers ultimately bond through a process of developing camaraderie and mateship to finally gelling together to become the 'band of brothers' (Woodward and Winter 2004:289) is also critically considered. I will then critically examine the way in which the soldiers write of their frustration at periods of non combat and their need to perform their 'warrior' role with their comrades as strong fighting men and how this can be expressed as a seemingly emotional lust to engage with the enemy.

6.2 Camaraderie:

Comrades, Comrades.
We from childhood played together,
My dear comrade Jack and I;
We would fight each other's battles,
To each other's aid we'd fly.
And in boyish scrapes and troubles,

You would find us everywhere,
Where one went the other followed,
Nought could part us, for we were,

Chorus.

Comrades, comrades, ever since we were boys,
Sharing each other's sorrows, sharing each other's joys;
Comrades when manhood was dawning, faithful
whate'er might betide,
When danger threaten'd my darling old comrade was
There by my side.

When just bidding into manhood,
I yearned for a soldier's life;
Night and day I dream'd of glory,
Longing for the battle's strife.
I said, Jack, I'll be a soldier,
'Neath the Red, the White and Blue,
Good bye, Jack! Said he No never!
If you go, then I'll go too.

I enlisted, Jack came with me,
And ups and downs we shared;
For a time our lives were peaceful,
But at length war was declared.
England's flag was insulted,
We were ordered to the front;
And the regiment we belonged to
Had to bear the brunt.

Popular ballad 1880 – 1900 published by the Poets' Box, Dundee

Camaraderie for the fighting soldiers in the SAW took a number of forms ranging from how soldier mates stick together against whatever the SAW presents them with, to

holding each other in affectionate regard, right through to the emotionally harrowing sense of loss of comrades on the battlefield. For both Tommy and his officers fighting in the SAW was to create conditions that forced soldiers at times literally to rub shoulder to shoulder and the group connectedness and bonding (Elias 2000, Scheff 2006,) were to become centre stage for all concerned. For fighting units this bonding in battle becomes an imperative for both physical and emotional survival (Adelman 2007).

Being at war is therefore *more* than being at war. Soldiers socialise together, interact together, eat together, sleep in the same confines, love each other, fight with each other and ultimately can die together. The soldier has in effect two families one is his biological family and the other the immediate family which are his soldier mates/chums/brother officers and this close immediate army family is arguably the most important social structure in the soldier's life (Peniston-Bird 2003:32, MacEoin 2009). An important part of this familial interaction is being sociable without which the bonds of camaraderie start to fracture. This sociability is sharing similar expectations as to how other men will behave and how you will behave in order to 'fit in' and be accepted within the soldier family (Scheff 2006:186). Although men are being exposed to the horrors of war they are at one and the same time trying to hold on to some semblance of civilised normality in an abnormal situation. Central to this are ideas of how men should behave as soldiers and this is an echo of Peniston-Bird's (2003) notion of admission to the 'boys club' where certain rules of behaviour have to be adhered to before acceptance into the group. For example being sociable, sharing with other males who use the same language of masculine superiority and also share the cultural ideal of a dominant hegemonic and heterosexual masculinity (Soulliere 2005:2). It could be as simple as Private Mumford recording in his diary⁹⁸; '...met with two younger nice chaps split a bottle of whiskey together...', where the act of drinking whiskey fits in with a manly social

⁹⁸ 20th. April 1900, diary entry, NAM 1998-10-148.

sharing to Trooper Stafford⁹⁹ likewise recording; ‘...there are seven in our tent a nice comfortable and sociable lot of chaps...’, where the close proximity of other men dictates that sociability is of paramount importance. This social interaction of men with other men is still rooted firmly primarily in the context of soldier mates as family. The diary entry of Private Frederick Lambert¹⁰⁰ further demonstrates the familial dynamics of soldiers living together in close proximity:

...parcels were included and mail distributed but got nothing myself. The men are very brotherly in my tent [indecipherable name] had a parcel and he shared the cigarettes with the other men, Jones had some Christmas pudding and cake and handed a piece to every man in the tent, Mills had a tin of shag which he left open to the tent[...].

As Peniston-Bird (2003) suggests the close proximity of the soldiers creates and reinforces a family type dynamic. Lambert refers to the ‘brotherly’ nature of the relationships that have been forged between the men sharing his tent and this gives substance to Woodward and Winters (2004:289) identifying soldier camaraderie as a ‘a band of brothers’. There is something very intimate in the sharing of the scarce resources they have. Each man is named individually enhancing the sense of emotional closeness of the ‘family group’ and the sharing of what must have been valuable items to the fighting soldier, cigarettes, food, tobacco (shag) also indicates that these men have bonded beyond the individual. This is a sharing of experience that brings these soldiers closer together and helps forms bonds that become strong, strong enough even to be tested in times of battle when you needed your soldier mates most. The experience of this bonding process in camaraderie for many started on the journey across to South Africa aboard the troop ships carrying thousands of soldiers to Cape Town. Captain Dallimore¹⁰¹ writes; ‘...It is a great sight to see the men bathing every afternoon,

⁹⁹ 24th. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 9602-121-1-4.

¹⁰⁰ 5th. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 9506-75-24/25.

¹⁰¹ 20th. May 1900, diary entry, PRO 1379.

they strip off and all stand together on the deck and the salt water hose is played on them, they all enjoy it immensely...’. This more than a functional cleansing routine, here men join in a collective ritual that suggests a playful and fun bath time, something they might have enjoyed as young boys growing up, literally a play on the notion of the ‘boy culture’ that describes where men indefinitely want to remain in boyhood (Dawson 2005 :264-271). These men on board ship are standing together, vulnerable in their unclothed form where their uniform is now their collective nakedness. This is as much a means of sharing and bonding as it is functional cleansing. It is also worthy of comment that this collective hosing down is something that appears to be the preserve of ‘Tommy’ and not an activity that officers appear to engage in. The officer gaze appears to be one of paternalistic approval rather than sexualised imagery. This depiction of an intimate yet non eroticised image can also be portrayed by Corporal Hammond when he writes¹⁰²; ‘...Have had a good wash [and] change of clothes [and] feel grand. Wilson is here with me I washed him [and] he washed me we are going into town this afternoon...’. The intimacy of this bathing is not being confused with a sexual intimacy, Hammond feels comfortable to enough to record this mutual bathing in his diary. The camaraderie of two soldiers is being enhanced and their bonding visibly demonstrated through this very close and intimate contact. In an era where homosociality was a valorised concept such intimate interaction would not necessarily be seen as out of place (Sedgwick 1985, Tosh 2005).

Not all of the interaction was necessarily of the close bonding kind and like all family groupings with individual family members living in such close proximity there can also be friction. Private Lambert gives the details¹⁰³:

...The men have been so upset lately that they are getting very waxy. Two of ‘F’ company had to settle their differences by fighting in the square. Me myself got waxy

¹⁰² 29th. August 1900, diary entry, PRO 0775.

¹⁰³ 13th. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 9506-75-24/25.

this morning because Pope and Forster could not see that I was entitled to a space more than six inches wide in the tent [for sleeping].

This quote demonstrates two elements of the family squabble. In the first instance the two 'F' company soldiers by settling their differences by fighting publically adhere to the physical nature of aggressive hegemonic masculinity where might is right (Connell 1995). By publically fighting the victor would automatically become the hegemonic superior and their dispute would be settled through establishing manly superiority. Although not quite the dimensions of settling their differences through pugilism Lambert none the less voices his discontent with his allocation of tent space but perhaps more importantly this grievance was being aired not only between the antagonists but in his diary entry perhaps in a cathartic sense so that the underlying dynamic of camaraderie was untarnished.

A further dimension of camaraderie revealed by the soldiers' narratives is that of how the SAW soldier can hold his comrade in arms with affectionate regard. Lieutenant James Craig uses language¹⁰⁴ that has a comfortable ease in how men can talk about other men in a way that gives the men described an important standing of manly decency:

...it is splendid having such a nice lot of chaps with me. Maude our Captain is a dear chap and so is Hugh Montgomery. Lord Leitrim is a decent boy, about 19 years of age, looks very delicate and at present is laid out on his back in his tent, rather knocked up. Montague is awfully decent and spares no pains to do what he can for me.

Here Craig not only feels the need to commit to his diary how decent these men are but by doing so reveals where his own compass of values is set. The words such as; *nice*, *dear*, *decent*, all convey a typology of attributes that categorise these men as good men and even though they are immersed in a war there is still a need for the soldiers to adhere to the socio-culturally defined expectation surrounding manly behaviour (Kaplan 2007). Civilised

¹⁰⁴ 31st. March 1900, diary entry, PRONI D1415/B/8.

behaviour expected of men has not yet been debased or devalued by the war and still carries with it substance and value (Elias 2000). Even the reference to Lord Leitrim is couched in gentle terms where his delicate condition is attributed to him being more of a boy than a man and therefore perhaps immune from those social expectations of manly men. Major W.S. Power emphasizes this¹⁰⁵; ‘...Braithwaite, the 2nd. in command is quite a nice man, a gentleman and a scholar...’, the categorization of being ‘nice’ carries with it attendant probity in relation to manliness.

The SAW also brought the British soldier into contact with a civilian population. The perception of how men interact with other men and here specifically soldiers with non soldiers is captured by Private Scott Leathart who a young man from the Gateshead area of the North East of England conveys to his sister in a letter¹⁰⁶ that despite being in the forefront of a war situation the more genteel aspects of male friendship had at least the opportunity to be realised:

Dearest Edie...I have formed a friendship with a clergyman here called Hilliard. He is a Deacon of the Cathedral here [in Bloemfontein]. He is awfully nice and has been very kind to me. He asks me to dinner nearly every day but of course I don't go. He took me to a concert at the Dean's. I enjoyed it awfully, the music just suited me. None of those horrible comic songs but really good things...I did enjoy them but of course they brought back home as it used to be with almost overwhelming force.

This sharing of social events does much to facilitate the enhancing of a sense of camaraderie even if in this case it is with a civilian (Thorpe 2010). Despite sharing similar language to that of Craig above there is some discernable caution in his writing as he does not say why he does not go to dinner more frequently with the clergyman. This perhaps hints at the fact that a soldier's first and foremost friendship should be with his soldier mates and not a civilian no

¹⁰⁵ 3rd. March 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

¹⁰⁶ 28th. February 1901, letter, NAM 9009-57-20-1.

matter how nice they were. The rest of the letter quote further suggests that there is a tension for Leathart between his soldier self and the one he would much rather be, his civilian more civilised self (Scheff 2006) and that being a soldier has emotional ties around friendship that make demands and has expectations that for some soldiers are difficult to deal with. Arguably for Leathart he has more of shared cultural and masculine heritage with the Deacon than with his fellow soldiers (Nayak 2003:148).

The SAW drew men from all parts of the Empire and beyond but the currency of sociability was strong no matter from which quarter the men came from as JF Smith¹⁰⁷ comments:

We were escorted by No 5 troop of Brabants Horse. About 150 men & a mixed crowd they were too. No two hardly dressed alike. Men from the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Australia, New Zealand, Canada & Argentina. Also Imperial Yeomanry who had transferred to Brabants Horse. Those that guarded our wagon were a nice sociable lot[...].

This sense of men sharing emotional social experiences with other men was not just confined to off the battlefield but could materialise as a result of the fighting itself. Lieutenant Power has a commanding officer who is at pains to administer a compassionate sense of concern in relation to Powers battlefield wounding. He could not describe his commanding officer in more endearing terms:¹⁰⁸

... Herbert [his commanding officer] has fussed about me like a mother, and is the best and kindest old thing in the world.

Power does not seem in any way reticent to use affectionate terms to describe his commanding officer and his familial reference to him in terms of being like a 'mother' sets

¹⁰⁷ 4th. June 1900, diary entry, NAM 2001-10-9.

¹⁰⁸ 16th. September 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

this apart from other references to men. This is not the derogatory reduction of masculinity to a feminine form, a remove from hegemonic masculine superiority (Connell 1995) but rather it has genuine affection and appreciation.

This outpouring of affection for fellow soldiers could have a counter balance and Captain Pine-Coffin¹⁰⁹ uses the back of his diary to record how he views certain individuals and groups in the SAW and in doing so applies a rather acerbic perspective:

C.I.V. [City Imperial Volunteers] = CAN I VENTURE/ CHAMBERLAINS
INNOCENT VICTIMS

I.Y. [Imperial Yeomanry] =I YEILD

K.O.S.B. [Kings Own Scottish Borders] = KEEP ON SLAYING BOERS

BULLER [General Redvers Buller] = SIR REVERSE BULLER

GATACRE [General Gatacre] = GENERAL MASSACRE

LORD METHUEN = LORD LET YOU IN

G. RUNDLE [General Rundle] = GENERAL BUNGLE.

Pine-Coffin was perhaps applying the ‘my troops are best’ test to his observations and thereby in a roundabout way was showing allegiance to his own soldiers almost an inverse camaraderie. All the references he makes refer to some weakness in either character or performance of the individuals or groups concerned although the reference to the Kings Own Scottish Borderers is more of a back handed compliment. Camaraderie is however more than the use of words it was about the reality of mates sticking together with mates in situations that pivoted around the battlefield in or out of combat situations. Being soldier mates and the camaraderie embedded within is the core fundamental relationship for most if not all soldiers in the SAW. It is not necessarily therefore dying for Queen or country, or the fighting for the greater goal of right over wrong that is the soldiers driving force but a visceral and at times raw defence of those who are your chums, your mates or your brother officers. The notion of

¹⁰⁹ J.E. Pine-Coffin Diary, Edited by S. Pine-Coffin published by Edward Gaskell (1999).

such close bonding of soldiers and how they come to rely on each other is considered for critical comment as the concept of mateship is now examined further.

Describing other men in a positive way also reinforced the performative essence of manly camaraderie as Captain C.T. Brierley writes¹¹⁰, 'I and Hardwicke were attached to [the brigades] commanded by Bilcher and Addlestone respectively both good men. Bilcher excitable, Addlestone cool.' As Judith Butler (1990) suggests it is the repetitive reinforcement of masculinity that gives it its foundation and in this case the reinforcing of camaraderie based on respect where being 'cool' is a positive masculine trait (Scheff 2006:161,163, de Visser 2008). This manly concept of being 'cool' is also the central theme for Captain Brierley when he writes¹¹¹ about an active combat engagement:

The Colonel was very agitated and I took no notice of him as I saw his condition, finally Briggs came and he was quite cool and took one gun and I the other, and we opened fire on the Boers from two new positions as they were endeavouring to get round to the rear of the convoy. The attempt was altogether frustrated. I fired three hundred rounds, Briggs and Normand helped me very much and we were the only cool ones left. Some of the regiment behaved well and returned fire but in two or three minutes all was over, one third of the regiment was wiped.

In this example Brierley looked to his comrades that he could rely on, the ones that could be cool under the 'hail' of enemy fire. He individually names the other soldiers distinguishing them from those who were not so 'cool' thus reinforcing the fact that it is them and not anyone else who were the soldiers manfully doing their duty. Being seen to be 'cool' in battle with other men identified and bonded these 'cool' fighters, Brierly, Briggs and Normand through their very public display of the performance of manliness, forged their manly credentials together as a team in the heat of battle. To reinforce how well they had worked together Brierley comments on how 'some' of the regiment had performed well in the battle.

¹¹⁰ 15th April 1900, diary entry, NAM 1994-05-356.

¹¹¹ Ibid. diary entry January 5th 1901.

In essence his narrative applauds the comrades that not only stick together in demanding circumstances and in doing so they reinforce their manly camaraderie. This sense of manly camaraderie is also evoked in the underlying adventure of the moment and in another diary entry Brierley records¹¹²:

...had gone a very short distance when there was a hail of bullets from concealed Boers at our scouts about one hundred yards ahead of us. They were both toppled over, and we had just time to throw ourselves off our horses and take cover...Elway had to bolt with a hole through his horse...he killed two Boers with his revolver, and had he been caught afterwards would certainly have been shot. The day was very exciting...The squadron got a great kudos for today's work...The men behaved very well indeed, and if there were signs of bolting when the Boers first ambushed us they would have been on us like a ton of bricks.

Elway has been elevated to hero status, Brierley very obviously in his diary sharing with Elway the excitement of action redolent of the 'boys own adventure' where the British soldier wins against the odds. There is an implicit camaraderie between Brierley and Elway he again uses his name to distinguish him from all others. There is also a more conciliatory language used towards the other men engaged in the action and they are awarded a positive remark. The feeling of group solidarity was for some very reassuring as Lieutenant Dejals records¹¹³:

Dearest Margaret,...if we have many more battles like last Fridays I shall want many hundred [indecipherable], it was awful, but darling it is a grand sensation to be bounding along with the shells landing around you and bullets everywhere and knowing you have some jolly good fellows behind ready to follow you anywhere[...].

Dejals manages to convey not only his manliness in describing his dashing manly attitude to combat but he recognises the benefit of having those around you that can be relied on, trusted to be with you as you fight and follow you in that fight it is a camaraderie to die for. This

¹¹² Ibid. diary entry July 17th. 1901.

¹¹³ 21st. December 1899, letter, NAM 9007-120-1.

reliance on others, the camaraderie of men at war and the emotional closeness of those you call chums is also visible with Sergeant Haywood¹¹⁴:

Some of the men who dragged themselves in were terribly wounded, one man having four wounds in his legs; some hit in the chest, stomach or head; and some being helped in by their chums, only to die within a few hours. A chum of mine told me that the bullets were flying so close that he gave up all hope of not being hit, but began to wonder where he would be hit, hoping it would not be in the head.

Apart from the graphic depiction of those wounded the salient feature of the entry is the use of the word 'chums'. These 'chums' were helping each other in the most horrific of bloody carnage and this reinforces again how important that close bond between soldiers is. They were not going to be left to die on the battlefield and if only to die later their 'chums' would not abandon them. Haywood also details how his own chum confides in him his fears of being hit by bullets and how he did not want to be hit in the head. This reveals the intimacy of that bond when the emotion of fear can be shared without negative repercussion. In this example one soldier can share with another his fears which if he did so with someone who was not a chum or close comrade could be construed as weakness as unmanly (Kimmel 1994:487). The intimate bonding of soldiers therefore provided not only mutual support and reliability in combat but an emotional crutch that was predicated on unsolicited mutual positive regard and this was a vital cornerstone of emotional survival in war. At times however it is the reality and the potential sense of personal loss, the loss of comrades, close friends, chums, brother officers or even unknown soldiers but still perceived as comrades in arms, that provides the emotional glue of camaraderie and it is to that sense of attachment and loss that the chapter is now focussed.

¹¹⁴ (No date), diary entry, NAM 9801-130.

'Comrades, comrades.'
In the night the savage foemen
Crept around us as we lay,
To our arms we leap'd and faced them,
Back to back we stood at bay.
As I fought a savage at me
Aimed his spear like lightning's dart,
But my comrade sprang to save me
And received it in his heart.

Chorus.

Comrades, comrades, ever since we were boys,
Sharing each other's sorrows, sharing each other's joys;
Comrades when manhood was dawning, faithful
whate'er might betide,
When danger threaten'd my darling old comrade was
There by my side.

Last verse and chorus. (Popular ballad 1880 – 1900 published by the Poets' Box, Dundee)

There is explicit homosocial behaviour between soldiers and it carries with it the tag of acceptability, and we see this accentuated in the SAW and refracted through the prism of the moral boundaries of Victorian England (Hall et al 2000). In the hegemonic staging of masculinity manly men were permitted to be homosocial but not homosexual. Major Pine-Coffin¹¹⁵ expresses feelings on the loss of a close comrade; 'Poor Atfield was killed... I miss Atfield more than I can say'. Pine-Coffin has committed his emotional loss to his diary but stops short of saying more – to do so might well lead him to drop his mask of manliness and expose his emotional vulnerability for all to see (Turner and Stets 2006:27). The standards of manly conduct and the codes prescribed for it are upheld when there has been no infraction of the rules and no challenge to the hegemonic status quo.

¹¹⁵ 15th October 1900, diary entry, Major Pine-Coffin Edited by S. Pine-Coffin (Edward Gaskell 1999).

The continual loss experienced by soldiers not only of their close comrades but from their wider extended family of comrades is clearly one that sits uncomfortably with notions of manliness. On the one hand emotional grief is a very human experience but for soldiers at war the mask of being emotionally tough (Woodward and Winter 2004:289) and presenting one's self as manly is at times a difficult tension to reconcile. Explicit and graphic description of the depiction of the death of a comrade can be very difficult as H.V. MacLennan writes¹¹⁶:

...The Boers have now killed poor Labram...poor chap he was in an awful mess. His heart was taken clean away and his left leg was just hanging by a thread. I took his death badly as I knew him so well.

MacLennan needs to detail the horrors undergone by his friend and it is as if by reliving the last sight of him so explicitly he can reconcile his emotional loss expressed so simply. Committing to writing a letter in such a way allows MacLennan to imbue his words with an emotional depth of loss that is disguised in their simplicity. There is no overtly overly emotional expression of loss other than he took the death badly but the juxtaposition of the last memory of Labram set against such a simple statement of loss makes it all the more powerful. The perceived need to discuss the true horror of combat death stripping it of any glory is taken up by Trooper Watson¹¹⁷:

...We could see pools of blood everywhere and the rocks and stones covered with blood. One of the men belonging to the North Lancashire Regiment laying dead shot in the mouth with an explosive bullet which shot away half his face. Another poor chap...shot through the heart. I won't attempt to describe the scenes as they were so heart rendering.

It appears to be an important element of registering the loss of comrades to graphically detail the bloody scene of their death. Recording the true horror of combat death in all its inglorious reality is I would argue a mechanism that allows for a literal emotional restraint while

¹¹⁶ 11th. November 1899, letter, NAM 9506-42.

¹¹⁷ 18th. February 1901, diary entry, NAM 1993-01-133.

revealing an unrestrained graphic depiction of death. There is somewhat of a contradiction in Watson's statement in that he does initially describe combat death in graphic detail and then states he will not describe the scenes as being too 'heart rendering'. Perhaps here Watson is not stepping beyond that line of emotionality that might betray an emotional weakness as such and therefore he might be unmanned. This self policing of emotion follows Scheff's (2006:163) assertion that men can at times attempt to mask any strong emotion for fear of being seen as weak and not fulfil the manly script. Adhering to the manly script is also the means by which comrades are judged in terms of emotional loss, that is the apparent respect or disrespect that is given them in death. Private Sunderland¹¹⁸ gives graphic detail:

...Going down the river after sun rise with some others to wash and fill our water bottles , we saw a crowd of troops standing around three wagons. On approaching, out of curiosity, we saw they were full of dead men of the Highland Brigade chiefly collected after Sunday's fight, it was an awful sight and one I will never forget. Poor fellows they had been loaded up like logs of wood, their faces looked more like birds than mens, pinched and drawn, and burnt black by lying in the sun, I was also aware their legs not covered by their kilts. The wagons were dripping blood , swallow flies hung over them and a whole stench arose for they had been lying in the sun for thirty six hours. It was hard to recognise that two days ago these forms now lying so stiff and stark were strong healthy men like ourselves. May their souls rest in peace, for they had fought the good fight, and died for their country, heroes every one of them...They were buried in three long graves,...officers and men for as the old song has it, 'rank makes no difference, death levels all'.

Death and the burying of loved ones, particularly of family members is an emotional time for any human being. Soldiers are no exception and the above diary extract demonstrates how comrades feel emotionally about how their fallen comrades are being dealt with. Private Sunderland uses graphic description but this time the initial undertone of his emotional response is one that exposes the seemingly lack of respect shown to the fallen who as

¹¹⁸ 20th February 1901, diary entry, NAM 1992-07-110.

comrades in arms deserve better treatment. They are no longer human, no longer men, instead he likens their treatment to that of a mechanised industrial operation devoid of any emotional base. The final disrespect was, especially for the Highland Brigade, the absence of the iconic kilt and the subsequent vulgar nakedness of the men stripped of dignity and to an extent unmanned. This is not what loved ones deserve nor comrades in arms merit. Part of Private Sunderland's emotional feeling of loss was the realisation that only a few days previously these were healthy men fulfilling the expectations of the manly script and as if to counter this and validate their loss he declares them heroes in a mini eulogy. The final comment of the extract serves to locate the loss of comrades not in terms of the distinction of rank but rather in terms of a universal loss of life where the commonality of death was shared by all comrades in arms. This emotional scene of the death of many soldiers is being shared by many other soldiers who have gathered around the wagons holding the dead soldiers. This is a sharing of collective grief and the subsequent feeling of emotional loss in the living is again eloquently captured in the chorus from the 'Comrades, Comrades' song above.

Private Sunderland like the rest of the men gathered around the wagons full of the Highland Brigade remembering the dead with respect becomes an important emotional anchor. Comrades, chums, mates, brother officers must and are remembered as would any family group. Paying due respect to the dead is part of the emotional healing that most families engage in and for soldiers fighting in South Africa their immediate family shared their tent, their food, their times of struggle and times of conviviality and ultimately their death. J.F. Smith¹¹⁹ records his visit with a companion to a grave yard:

Forster & I then took a walk...to the cemetery where we had a look at the graves of the inhabitants & our troops who have unfortunately found a resting place in this wild spot- unknown & forgotten- the majority with nothing on top of their grave to identify them. Bourne silently on stretcher sewn up in their blankets - no coffins. Buried &

¹¹⁹ 4th July 1901, diary entry, NAM 2001-10-9.

forgotten- no tender mother, sweetheart or wife to mourn over their grave & place with a gentle hand a bunch of flowers or a wreath. In some cases their comrades have got a slab of stone – fairly smooth on one side & have roughly carved out...their deceased comrades name & date of his death. ..One inscription on a piece of wood...made with an indelible pencil seems pathetic- no name or description of deceased only the words, inscribed in a scrawly black letter fashion GORN BUT NOT FORGOTTON[...].

What is striking about this entry is the stark anonymity of the fallen soldiers. This is exaggerated by the reference to the fact that none of the soldiers ‘natural’ family are there to mourn their passing with the mother figure given much prominence as a key missing family member. Instead in a very poignant and simple way their death is indeed acknowledged this time by their soldier mates, their comrades. The emotional loss of their comrades is at least to a degree made good by the simple act of acknowledging their names on a grave marker. Their emotional loss has been named both literally and metaphorically because simply through such naming of comrades deaths and marking their names they carry out a last act of love for their mates. The concept of the loss of one’s comrades as the possible ultimate expression of manly soldierliness appears to be on the mind of Sergeant Francis¹²⁰ when he writes, ‘[...] Several NCOs were killed or died from their wounds, one a sergeant Barry a fine manly young fellow only 22 I personally much regretted [...]’, Francis records his sorrow at such loss of life, but specifically to the loss of one ‘fine manly young fellow’, Barry. This is where the ultimate sacrifice and a sense of personal loss are alleviated by conferring on Barry the quality of manliness. This appears also to be on the mind of Sergeant RB Haywood¹²¹ when he writes:

One general (Hamilton) characterised it [the siege of Ladysmith] as ‘the most gallant feat of arms during the whole campaign’. Our Colonel said in Battalion orders that the news of such a deed was ‘probably ringing around the whole of England...The

¹²⁰ 27th. December 1899, diary entry, NAM 1974-01-138.

¹²¹ 6-10th. January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1998-01-130.

question in my own mind is: was the victory too dearly bought? For many a fine fellow was sacrificed for the victory.

There is turmoil in the writings as they start to question the loss of life despite the rhetoric of gallantry. For Scheff (2006:65,166), men can hide emotions like those expressed by Haywood through silence, a mirror image of the English gentleman's 'stiff upper lip' (Downes 2005:5). In Haywood's diary entry that silence is finally given a voice in his writing; the toughness and loyalty that a military masculinity demands is now being eroded (Higate 2007). Having marked the graves of the fallen or buried them in pits the SAW soldier still had a war to fight and the dynamics of the relationships between soldier participants of all ranks are fluid and are still playing out and the chapter now considers those in turn.

6.3 'Tommy' and his officers:

'Tommy'

I went into a public 'ouse to get a pint o' beer,

The publican 'e up an' sez, 'We serve no redcoats here'

The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,

I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:

O it's Tommy this an' Tommy that, an' Tommy go away';

But it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band begins to play -

The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,

O it's 'Thank you Mister Atkins,' when the band begins to play.

(Rudyard Kipling, 'Tommy', 1890: first verse.)

The actual conditions experienced by the soldiers in the SAW were for some unexpected. To many, they contradicted their aspirations to wage war on the enemy in major hand to hand engagements, some experienced fatigue spent in lengthy marches between battles, other fighting units were stopped in their tracks and pinned down in sieges while the only recourse open to other units was to engage the Boers in a series of small skirmishes. During the SAW large-scale face to face combat was concentrated within the first few

months, as a consequence more than anything else, the real fight was for survival from hunger, disease and constant harrying from the Boers. The environment of war time conditions combined with the close proximity in which the soldiers were forced to live resulted in greater scrutiny and a magnification of all their behaviour. The previous apparent hegemonic deference between ‘Tommy’ and his officers and between junior officer and senior officer (Clayton 2007) unravelled more and more the longer the war continued. It also became apparent that even between ‘Tommy’ and his soldier mates; fault lines were beginning to appear.

As the war progressed the officers’ leadership capabilities and decisions increasingly came into question, and the diaries and letters show that the manly behaviour of both ‘Tommy’ and his subalterns was being tested. I argue here that there is a repositioning of the hegemony of military rank as officers come under critical censure for their failings in leadership and combat performance, while at the same time there is a realignment of soldier mates into the manly and the weak with a subsequent ‘valorising of emotional toughness’ (Woodward and Winter 2004:289). In the diaries and letters the soldiers begin to draw clear distinctions around the behaviours of fellow comrades, their comments identify those who adhere to the accepted and admired behaviours of the manly soldier, but they save the harshest criticisms for those who fail to perform to the desired manly script. This was indeed a departure from the earlier stage of the conflict, when caught up in patriotic fervour little criticism is voiced. For the ordinary ‘Tommy’, this disapproval could be displayed as a gradually developing contempt for particular officers to a general disdain for all officers. As Private CA Saville¹²² unequivocally states in a series of letters sent home to his mother, written during the siege of Ladysmith:

¹²² 14th. January 1900, letter, NAM 93-09-82.

There was a voluntary church parade this morning conducted by Captain Longfield the biggest liar and rogue in our battalion[...] Johnny Longfield is well liked by his comrades I don't think [and] all the other officers don't like him.

Saville takes a highly critical opinion of the officer called Longfield, and strengthens this position by comparing it to the view of Longfield held by *all* the men in the battalion, not just the officers. There is no deference to the military hegemonic order, indeed, Saville hints at a schism in officer-officer relationships: in the theatre of war, men were to be judged against an overriding standard of virtuous manliness. In another letter, Saville continues in a similar vein¹²³:

We got biscuits and it's a great shame the way they [the officers] rob us out of rations. I only got 9½ ounces between two of us instead of 8 ounces each [and] it is no use making a complaint as they take no notice of you... besides how can officers have half a dozen biscuits for each meal if they don't rob poor Tommy. I would like to be a good writer I would write a book about the officers. This war has fairly shown them up from the Colonials downwards ... [the officers] do all the bullying while Tommy does all the work... [the Sergeant Major and officers] are the greatest cowards in the regiment[...].

Less than a month after his first letter, Saville includes the behaviour of all officers in his condemnation. Although these comments may be simply a manifestation of the deprivation and hunger experienced by ordinary soldiers, they nevertheless illustrate that, under close quarter conditions, actions that may not normally be given much importance are, in fact, more keenly scrutinized and are imbued with greater symbolism. Such actions are seen to indicate officers' abuse of power. Acceptance of officer power and legitimacy begins to be challenged in Saville's epithet: 'the greatest cowards' and his yearning for greater literary skills so he can fully record these events in itself speaks volumes. Saville could be perceived as a malcontent who continually takes umbrage against the officers he works under; but in the

¹²³ Ibid. diary entry 4th. February 1900.

confinement of the siege of Ladysmith, the constant confined physical proximity to the officers enables him to see their actions from close at hand, allowing him to detect officer behaviour that justifies his feelings. His initial grumbling over food and drink is a harbinger of many greater challenges to come as the war progresses, challenges that will affect not only relationships between ‘Tommy’ and officers, but the idea of soldierly manliness itself.

Despite being in this close quarter situation at Ladysmith, officers do not appear to scrutinize ‘Tommy’ so closely, and they appear to have little awareness of how their actions might unbalance the power relationship between them when they perform below expectations. Their confidence in their own hegemonic legitimacy makes them apparently immune to the different levels of deprivation that pertain in the small shared space they inhabit. The letter sent to his family of Captain C. E. Balfour¹²⁴ for Christmas Day 1899 (Ladysmith) perfectly illustrates this; ‘Big feed at night of stores reserved for Xmas. 1 doz pints of champagne for 36 officers. Everyone much cheerier and looking forward. [...]’. This demonstrates how far rank and privilege made a difference to men’s experience during the SAW. These narrow hierarchical confines act as a catalyst that initiates the process through which the hegemonic order between ‘Tommy’ and his officers comes to unravel; they provide small theatres in which the varied experiences of the soldiers participating in differing combat arenas will ultimately challenge the accepted fabric of soldierly manliness. The continued lack of recognition of the difficult situation and the denial of priority for the physical hunger experienced by ‘Tommy’ is emphasized in a further letter from Balfour dated after the siege;¹²⁵ ‘Those things you sent from Fortnum and Mason simply ripping. All the world is sending us presents’. The glaring contrast between Saville’s and Balfour’s experiences illustrates how difficult wartime conditions that are differentially experienced could act as the catalyst for questioning the established order of relations between officers

¹²⁴ 25th. December 1899, letter, NAM 1996-03-36.

¹²⁵ Ibid. letter 7th. March 1900.

and 'Tommys'. The disappointment expressed by Saville that his officers do not fit the model of a noble, selfless and heroic leader (Dawson 2005) together with the lack of any insight into their own actions on the part of Balfour and his fellow officers will ultimately lead to a split in the imperial hierarchy and the ideology that underpinned it.

This disappointment with the leadership ability and actions of senior officers was mirrored by Trooper Stafford¹²⁶, he records an incident where not only his own men but fellow officers are critical of the actions of their Lieutenant,

...we were standing like dummies on the veldt. I could hear that Lieutenant Davies was having a warm time of it and instead of our section going to Lieutenant Davies assistance our Lieutenant gave us the order to mount and retire...[later as Lieutenant Davies passed us] our officer remarked "you have been having some shooting" to which Lieutenant Davies remarked " The devil are you doing stuck here why didn't you come to my assistance with your men owing to you I have had to leave three of my men behind"...Our Lieutenant received a severe lecture from the Captain of the squadron...likewise by the Colonel... 'Maudie' [female name] as our Lieutenant is affectionately named by his brother officers and known as such by the squadron, he is rather an effeminate chap[...].

Stafford and his fellow soldiers are rendered impotent by the actions of their Lieutenant, Stafford is also quite clear that the right and manly action would have been to go to the aid of the other section. He uses the expression dummies to emphasise how they were left stuck, inactive, prevented from participating in the action to help their comrades. He wants to make it clear that the disgrace of this action falls clearly on the shoulders of his Lieutenant, by recording the reprimands given to him. He also wants to record the fact that other officers single out the Lieutenant by denigrating and feminizing him with the name 'Maudie', he is

¹²⁶ 28th. May 1900, diary entry, NAM 9602-121-1-4.

unmanned. The troops relationship with 'Maudie' does not improve, and Stafford¹²⁷ records another incident that occurred two months later while they were out on patrol,

...we, No. 4 Troop under 'Maudie' Fleming...reached a farmstead and found two armed Boers...[they were arrested and disarmed] then 'Maudie' came around brandishing an empty revolver in the Dutchmen's faces and shouting "Hands up Hands up"...the corporal told him, "They are quite harmless sir I have their rifles", but 'Maudie' was overly excited and demanded that the Dutchmen mount immediately and proceed with us to camp.

By recording this incident Stafford makes a clear contrast between the actions of the officer and his men, he describes the hysterical actions of 'Maudie' against the calm and level headed actions of the corporal and his men. The fact that he has an empty revolver emphasizes the emptiness of his actions, and ultimately his character, he appears bungling and ineffectual compared to the men in the troop. He is not fit to have the respect of his men; he has lost any hegemonic legitimacy, while the men have now taken on the role of superior manly warriors (Goldstein 2006:274).

'Tommy' was becoming increasingly disillusioned, with the inability of officers to confront the Boers – the enemy effectively. In his diary entry¹²⁸, written during the siege of Mafeking, a Sergeant Francis reveals a sense of embarrassment and upset as he reflects on his officer's incompetence to lead his men. There is also a tangible sense of sadness, loss and regret mixed with implicit contempt for those who ordered the action:

But now I come to the saddest day of the siege Boxing Day 1899...We were sent out under the cover of darkness...for an attack at dawn.... By some error of judgement or misunderstanding the sun was rising before any movement was made or gun fired ... We saw C Squadron advancing splendidly in open order against the enemy's position, very few fell in advance; and at 500 yards tried to rush the fort at the point of the

¹²⁷ Ibid diary entry 18th July 1900.

¹²⁸ 27th December 1899, diary entry, NAM 1974-01-138.

bayonet ... but the losses were terrible ... It terrible upset us all and made us very indignant at somebody's blunder[...].

The use of the very personal 'us' I take here to mean 'Tommy' and the mistake being apportioned to a 'somebody' is an officer 'somebody'. In this way, the hegemony of the non officer is valorised, while the hegemony of officers is subordinated. This challenge to the competency of Francis's officers is a questioning of the hegemony of rank itself, driven as it is by discontent in general and distrust of officers and the leadership abilities specifically.

The long hours soldiers can have between engagements allowed them to reflect on their situation, and to indulge in recriminations. Thus, many 'Tommys' not only began to question seriously why some of their officers clearly did not conform to their expectations of the 'good military leader' extolled in Victorian myth (Knight 1996), but also turned their eyes instead to the actions of their own colleagues in combat sorties against the Boers. Not only was 'Tommy' challenging the status quo embedded within the military rank structure, but he was also impugning the manly credentials of his mates. This questioning of the leadership qualities of officers *and* the behaviour of ordinary soldiers can be seen in Private Harry Phipps's comments¹²⁹:

[When] we got there we plainly see they [the ordinary soldiers of the firing line] were in a state of blue funk, the officers were as bad as or worse than the men. Our men indignantly told them what they thought of their action, & after a lot of persuasion (one way or another) they commenced like a pack of frightened sheep. All of a sudden an automatic Maxim Nordefelt [machine gun] began to play among us. That stopped the firing line, for flat on their faces they fell & devil if a move they would make at all. Then the effects of discipline was exhibited. Our officers equal to any emergency shouted "advance & leave the cowards there" and to a man the Dubs [Dubliners regiment] and Borders [Kings Own Scottish Borderers] responded, walking like men on parade... I delivered the message alright[...].

¹²⁹ 1st May 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-02-15.

This account by Harry Phipps presents a more complex picture of combat, which restores the hegemonic balance in favour of particular but not all officers. In chiding both his own 'Tommy' mates and the officers of another regiment, Phipps reinforces the hierarchical values of his own regiment and his own immediate mates. With Sergeant Francis, he shares the overriding feelings of indignation and embarrassment that are engendered by the shortcomings of other soldiers, but in his case all ranks are included, not just officers. More than this, we can discern a hint of menace where an effort is made to redress these shortcomings; this is particularly noticeable in the attempt by Phipps and his fellows to persuade their fellow soldiers to fight, 'one way or another'. Men who did not conform to the manly code were to be brought back into the fold and his choice of language by referring to some of the soldiers as sheep reinforces the analogy. The reference to machine gun fire as mere play subjugates still further the actions of the soldiers who cower under its power as weak and even effeminate (Barrett 2001). So great was the need to save face and win the manly character contest (Goffman 2005:209) where manly men have 'courage' (Scheff 2006:163) to fight that Phipps and his mates appear to resort to violence real or otherwise to re-establish the manly status quo. Phipps's language therefore unmans the troops who did not perform their soldierly duty and he judges them as inferior men and soldiers (Meyer 2004). The 'blue funk' of hysteria is mere camouflage for a deeper underlying rebuttal of the manly soldiering that Phipps and his comrades embrace with such apparent ease. There is also an implicit menace in his comment that 'I delivered the message alright'. The message Phipps was delivering was binary. Not only had the enemy been engaged in bloody combat by manly men in the face of deadly machine gun fire, but by their own actions some of his mates had been stigmatised as cowards and unmanned as men. Phipps had passed the manhood test by being 'where the action is' a conceit reminiscent of Goffman's ideas on hypermasculinity

where men attempt to display courageous integrity in order to impress other men (Goffman 2005).

The slur of cowardice as Phipps points out separates those less worthy individuals from the superior men, who by their very actions deserve respect and recognition. Private Frederick Lambert¹³⁰ is equally scathing of any soldier who would deliberately avoid action, he writes; ‘...when in camp you can hear [the colour sergeant] shouting but when we advance and there is a prospect of fighting he falls sick and remains at the rear but when we come back to camp he turns out again’. His contempt for the colour sergeant is written in sarcastic tones, his shouting is meaningless without the actions to back it up and his actions are that of a weak man (Barrett 2001).

Lieutenant Colonel Rawlinson, one of the commanding officers at Ladysmith, was equally scathing¹³¹ of officers and ‘Tommys’ alike:

...There are a great many shirkers amongst the company of the Leicesters .. half of them were not for it and I fear that the residence in holes and constant ‘taking cover from the enemy’s bullets and shells’ has had a serious effect on men’s nerves and I doubt they would stand the night work now they are too jumpy... It is curious how in a siege like this the bad or moderate regs [regiments] go to the wall and how a reg[iment] with a good CO [Commanding Officer] comes to the front... the 60th [Rifles] are in a bad way. They were roughly handled both at Talana and Lombards Kop ...and Grimwood who commands the second Battn [Battalion] has quite gone to pieces and is unfit ... he must be invalided[...].

Like Phipps, Rawlinson sees virtue and frailty in equal measure in both ‘Tommy’ and his officers, but the language he uses when describing the plight of Grimwood is worthy of further analysis. Grimwood has obviously suffered much in the previous fighting, but because he is an officer he can be legitimately invalided out of front line combat without the sanction

¹³⁰ 9th February 1900, diary entry, NAM 9506-75-24/25.

¹³¹ 9th January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1952-01-33.

of being labelled unmanly. This suggests that, as an officer, his manly warrior credentials were not being challenged; rather, he was deemed to be ill and, as such, could be invalided out in order to provide a means of saving face and to retain the hegemonic position of the officer class. This was not an option available to the ordinary 'Tommy', who could well find himself on a charge of cowardice for similar behaviour. This way of making excuses for officers' behaviour continued into World War One, where not one officer was shot for cowardice (there were several royal pardons) but over three hundred men from the ordinary ranks were executed (Putkowski and Sykes 1998). The sanctuary of being retired behind the lines for mental distress was apparently a privilege given to officers; helping to preserve the military status quo and making it seem inconceivable that an officer could be anything but a manly warrior (Dawson 2005).

Yet another example of the dissonance found between officers is narrated in a letter to his wife by Colonel Fred Cresswell¹³² who took part in the siege of Mafeking. In it, Cresswell's immediate commanding officer comes in for manly praise whereas Colonel Baden-Powell, who is in overall military control, does not; '... Alfred ... is a first rate commander perfectly cool and calm in action, quite ready to take any risks ...'. Cresswell is already positioning his commanding officer Alfred his immediate commanding officer in terms of a 'character contest' (Scheff 2006) with Baden-Powell. Alfred is not only winning the battle for hegemonic superiority, but performs like a true warrior. Cresswell continues:

When Baden-Powell said just now turning to us, 'Some of you know what a siege is like and what hardships are' I felt very inclined to say 'Yes but I don't think you seem to know much about it.

Even within the context of a letter home, this is quite a contemptuous remark for Cresswell to make, particularly in relation to Baden-Powell, who was, of course, widely revered. He

¹³² 18th May 1900, letter, NAM 1985-07-71.

justifies his disparaging comments by continuing in the same letter in a similar vein: 'I was rather disappointed in Baden-Powell. He was so exaggerated in the speech he made to us, talked of having given the Boers a real good dusting etc. which was rot.' However, Cresswell goes on to reassert Baden-Powell's seniority and restores him to high status when he finishes his letter in the following terms: 'However no doubt he knows it was not [the siege was an embarrassment to the British] and thought it right to talk a lot of pretty pretty.'

Cresswell may not have been the only one to find himself unimpressed by Baden-Powell; as a high-ranking officer, the colonel would likely have his detractors across the ranks. Cresswell's comments are interesting because of his equivalent senior rank; they help expose the nature of manly character contests in terms of seniority of rank. However, Cresswell could well have been heartened to read a comment¹³³ made by Captain Joseph Dallimore from the Australian Contingent he wrote; 'Nearly everyone thinks all together too much was made of the siege [Mafeking] and Baden-Powell.' Another officer, Captain C. E. Balfour, also criticises those above him in the command structure, thus reinforcing a growing sense of how hegemonic military masculinity was becoming blurred. During the siege of Ladysmith Captain C.E. Balfour wrote¹³⁴ as follows in relation to blunders made by senior ranks:

We must hang on and wait for the Army Corps which ought to have been here months ago, a wicked waste of life has consequently ensue...[such were the hardships endured on our side].Our men actually slept while holding position and had to be kicked awake to make them fire[...].

¹³³ 19th. January 1900, diary entry, PRO 1379.

¹³⁴ 30th. October 1899, diary entry, NAM 1996-03-36.

The question of leadership and hierarchy now became common in many of the writings, although the hegemonic challenge was never clear cut; there were still men who adhered to the manly warrior ideal. Captain P. H. Normand writes¹³⁵ thus to his father:

Tommy Atkins is a gallant chap and I don't think he is easily disheartened, I have only one thing against him and that he is too much of a machine and is not taught to use his own common sense enough ... When led by their officers Tommy Atkins is all here and full of pluck.

This reinforces the hegemonic ideal of the officer as a superior being. He goes on to say in the same letter:

I rather think that the reason why the ILH [Imperial Light Horse] has done so well is that they being a very well educated lot and mostly gentlemen are just as competent to defend a place or attack.

The composition of the ILH even at non-officer level was heavily weighted in favour of 'gentlemen'; such was the recruitment process (as detailed in Chapter Four). Thus, the military rank of the ILH soldier was not so important for Normand as their class position, which restores a sense of hegemony.

This exalted status of the ILH was also highlighted by GC Maidment (Royal Army Medical Corps) when writing his diary¹³⁶ in the siege of Ladysmith:

Still heavy firing into town & camp from umbulwaan [Boer position] the enemy have allowed Mrs. Doveton whose husband lies wounded & dying to pass through [sic]there lines, Major Doveton was known as[...] a leader who had played his part manfully in every fight where the I. L. Horse had been engaged. He was badly wounded among the band of heroes who held Wagon Hill ... [Doveton died of his wounds].

¹³⁵ 16th. January 1900, letter, NAM 1998-02-207.

¹³⁶ 12th. February 1900, diary entry, G.C. Maidment, Chalmers (2000:203).

Major Doveton's actions as recorded here embody the hegemonic and dramaturgical achievements of the manly warrior; as a leader from the ILH and, therefore a gentleman, he rides out to combat as a manly leader and a mortally wounded hero. Doveton personifies all that that the hegemonic and manly warrior script of the SAW soldier was supposed to be. He had 'gone to his gawd like a soldier' (Knight 1996).

The SAW soldier was placed in settings in which he endured harsh conditions, deprivations and shortages, but he also had time and opportunity to reflect on the actions of his comrades and his superiors. It is from the periods between actions these fixed, unyielding spaces of anxious waiting, frustration and at times privation that the diary and letter comments I have examined so far emanate. It is little wonder that an imputation of blame comes to be attached to a leadership that appears confused and impotent. What may be more surprising is how such blame is apportioned by one officer to another. Those who share similar positions of privilege within the hierarchy appear often to be in conflict with each other: character contests to demonstrate manliness are really mechanisms for character assassination.

The evidence I have taken from soldiers shows recurring disruption between individual officers; but the social dynamic appears more complex than may have first been perceived, with strife occurring between rank and file soldiers. For many soldiers of all ranks, their primary *raison d'être* as combat soldiers was at odds with their position as men either held behind lines, trapped in a siege or taking the war to civilians, and the absence of fighting and direct engagement with the enemy was for some an intolerable form of pseudo-emasculatation. It is this arena of combat frustration that the chapter now addresses.

6.4 Lust for a fight

The link between being a manly warrior and participating in the glory of battle was compelling; as seen in chapter Five soldiers were initially keen to demonstrate their bravery and manly prowess through victory in battle. This was the way to perform their manhood, to crucially receive recognition from their fellows for brave actions. Periods of inactivity presented a particular challenge to how the soldiers reacted not only to the conditions but to each other, the most extreme cause of such challenge were the three sieges which carried on from October 1899 until February and May 1900. I argue that the sieges present a unique opportunity to critically observe ‘Tommy’ and his officers in extremely demanding and testing conditions. The particular conditions presented by the sieges resulted in soldiers being confined to a tightly defended area, with little opportunity to engage the Boers in actual fighting, save for the occasional sortie. The sieges were invested at the beginning of the SAW, in the case of Kimberley and Mafeking only a few days into the conflict with Ladysmith the last siege only 20 days after the declaration of war. This was to have a potent effect on those soldiers who were trapped in these conditions so early into the conflict. In a letter home written just over a month into the siege of Ladysmith that was to last until February 1900 – Captain Balfour¹³⁷ uses language that illustrates his disappointment at being prevented from fulfilling what he sees as the proper role of a manly soldier:

Dear Mummy,

Here we are likely to stop for some time. It is most tedious and dull [...], wearing and disheartening work. There is nothing to work up any excitement about as there is very little or no retaliation on our part to the continual bombardment [...] It's not a bit one's idea of active service [...].

¹³⁷ 18th. December 1899, letter, NAM 1996-03-36.

Balfour covers any disgrace that may be apportioned from being besieged by simply ascribing it as dull; despite a fierce daily bombardment it is important for him to try to retain his 'cool', show no fear and affirm his manhood by wishing for the 'excitement' of combat (Kaplan 2007:57).

Although the siege soldier wanted to fight rather than sit passively and be on the receiving end of constant shelling, suffering food and water shortages, sometimes there was little choice – as Sergeant David Maxwell writes in a letter to his parents¹³⁸ from Ladysmith; 'Here we are waiting for Buller [General Buller's relief column] patiently as we can[...]'. Not everyone waited patiently or passively. Some were fiercely impatient to engage the enemy displaying pent up emotional frustration combined with a lust for combat, a situation that led some into a state of heightened aggression, where only the meting out of acute violence can assuage their self image, to be a manly warrior (Braudy 2003). Sergeant Alfred Rumbold at Ladysmith recalls a combat sortie;¹³⁹ 'The Boers were exceedingly quiet yesterday, but we gave them another surprise tonight, also a taste of the bayonet for the first time'. In a distorted metaphor, the bayonet – or sword as it was sometimes referred to – had become for Rumbold something to be tasted, as if it were food or drink. Not only that, but he takes things further in another metaphor, where hunting stands in for the killing of enemy soldiers; 'We go out anticipating great sport, although it is the least bit of sport some of the poor bounders get in this world[...]'. There is a great sense of enjoyment and release as the men are able to go out together and take part in killing the enemy, particularly at close quarters using the bayonet, so that Rumbold and his mates can savour each action. The Boers are now reduced from human beings to game fit to be hunted down and butchered. Rumbold and his soldier mates move towards a crescendo, an expression of a violent collective outpouring where aggression and extreme violence are the bench marks of their manliness

¹³⁸ 10th. January 1900, letter, NAM 1974-02-32.

¹³⁹ 10th. December 1900, diary entry, NAM 1977-11-8.

and masculinity (Bowker 1998). This is when they can finally experience the bursting out of pent up frustration (Goffman 2005, Scheff 2006):

The Colonel shouted 'Fix swords' [bayonets] at the top of his voice ... the sentry was instantly run through ... then the sport commenced, everyone went under that got in our way ... The Boers got round us with the intention of cutting us off. Then the sport commenced again. With our bayonets fixed we went through them, and a very rough time they had of it ... likewise ourselves, for we cut through them suffering heavily.

This is no longer the emotional silence that men sometimes withdraw into, but rather an explosive outpouring of violence, when men's emotional responses turn to bloodlust (Scheff 2006: 161,165,166). The emotions held back by the soldiers' collective (Scheff 2006:125-127) have suddenly been released and spill over into a desperate urge to kill and a bloody slaughter of the Boers ensues. Rumbold continues:

We got through the first lot all right, then we came across forty in a donga [ditch]. I fancy we killed every one of these. We eventually reached the railway leaving sixty killed ... I think we had a delightful night. We made a glorious name for ourselves, and I for one should have been very sorry to have missed it[...].

The men at last had been able to fulfil the manly warrior role that had been denied them by being held under siege by the Boers, and as a consequence for this the Boers now had to receive the most violent of retribution. In writing of this event in such detail Rumbold was able to describe the way in which the superior manly warrior status was restored not only to himself but also importantly his soldier mates.

Writing about the same action, Sergeant R. B. Hayward¹⁴⁰ records another version of events in his diary. There are many similarities in the pace and the immediacy of violent and bloody combat; 'The sentry fired his rifle and was just making off when a Company Sergeant of ours was on him and brained him with his clubbed rifle, and, fixing swords [bayonets] our

¹⁴⁰ 11th. December 1899, diary entry, NAM 1998-01-130.

lads charged... with a ringing cheer[...]. The same sense of relish to be engaging physically close with the enemy is again reflected here, as if the men needed to personally inflict their collective revenge at being held under siege. Rumbold again uses a sporting metaphor, reducing the Boers to a sub species of hunted game in order to render them subordinate. Hayward¹⁴¹ uses another mechanism to detail his lust for fighting:

The Boers (who cannot face cold steel) did not wait ... Some [Boers] who were not able to get away were bayoneted ... the only thing to do under the circumstances was to cut a way or die fighting and as surrender was not even thought of in they went with the bayonet [...].

Haywood places emphasis on the bayoneting and cutting and physical hand to hand fighting to illustrate how this was an extremely violent situation, where only the strongest and best would survive. His reference to fighting to the death elevates this into more than a skirmish but a contest where only the fierce fighting of the manly warrior would bring success. He also juxtaposes the apparent Boer cowardice against the courage of the British soldier, who was;¹⁴² 'fighting for his life against desperate odds and knew it ... Others say that they never hoped to get out of it alive, but resolved to die fighting ...'. This resolution to 'do or die' gives credence to the use of savage violence and the accompanying blood lust, it elevates the action into a noble encounter on which the reputation of the manly credentials of the soldiers revolve.

Both Rumbold and Haywood write of the same event, going into bloody detail as if savouring and reliving the accounts. Sergeant Rumbold embraces a lust for killing whose roots can be located in a need for violence borne out of frustration, desperate for a release and opportunity to participate in a military action where violence has power and confers hegemonic status (Connell 1995). Sergeant Hayward reveals much more of a lust to regain

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

the reputation of the soldiers as manly warriors and this can only be achieved by bestowing unquestionable punishment on the enemy. These are accounts by soldiers who had been under siege for about two months and had suffered the privations and powerlessness of siege conditions. Their vivid descriptions of the same incident provides further evidence for the fact that masculinity in war is not only contingent on the conditions prevailing at the time – in this case, siege conditions – but on the playing out of scripts that will ultimately end in the release of a pent up frustration with all its violence and blood lust discharged by the opportunity to engage in the mayhem created by the masculinity of a warrior in combat.

The quest for bloodlust was never just confined to any particular period or situation in the SAW. In an example of the repetitive performativity of soldiering Corporal Tom Grayson writes graphically home to his family¹⁴³:

My dear brother [...] we went right through with it and slaughtered everyone of the Boers, about 200 got out [on horseback]...but the Lancers got behind them, then you should have seen the curs fall off and scream for mercy, but they got none, I saw one Lancer put his lance through two on one pony...You will think by the tone of letter I have turned into a bloodthirsty devil, but when you are at it all day all you think of is killing...Your affectionate brother Tom.

Grayson's letter suggests that combat as a means of 'playing the game' in a gentlemanly way has been abandoned in favour of battlefield behaviours that would not seem out of place in an abattoir. Tellingly though he refers in the last sentence to the ever presence of killing as a routine of everyday life, the performativity of violence (Butler 1990). Perhaps the constant barrage of killing has removed any vestige of humanity or emotion where even notions of how to behave in a manly way have become blurred. No quarter is given, not even when the Boers 'scream for mercy', and this is where Grayson starts his descent into an explicit condoning of wanton violence. The Boers had surrendered, so there was no need for the

¹⁴³ 13th. January 1900, letter, NAM 8910-132.

slaughter; yet the tone of the letter and the description of the violence condone rather than condemn. Perhaps it is the final line of the letter that says most about Grayson's attitude to killing. He apologizes to his brother for sounding 'bloodthirsty', yet in exoneration of this he argues that his daily immersion in killing has weakened, if not destroyed, any pretence to the brave warrior script where fighting is fair with mercy from the victor assured is rapidly disappearing. Grayson has been stripped of any vestige of magnanimous warrior manliness and is reduced to the state which has described as 'anomie', – to be without guidance from established standards of behaviour, even in war (Giddens 2009:941,942).

The wounded Captain P.H. Normand¹⁴⁴ appears to embrace fully the feeling for bloodlust:

The Boers fought very well and numbers stood to the last and were bayoneted by the Gordons and the Manchesters. After it was all over we cheered lustily. The Gordons [the Gordon Highlanders pipers] played, 'The Cock of the North.

Manliness is conceived as having to conform to codes of behaviour but in war such codes are eroded in the heat of battle. Like real life mirroring fiction, the gallant wounded officer defeats his worthy foe against almost insurmountable odds, but just as this hero appears replete with all things a manly warrior may need, a much darker, more sinister side of him emerges. Again, mirroring the extract from Grayson's battlefield episode, the plucky Boers were not taken prisoner but put to the bayonet (or 'sword' as 'Tommy' preferred to call it). For Normand too there was no mercy, no clemency, and certainly no gentlemanly gesture of magnanimity in defeat; but rather a more chilling exposure of manly behaviour in the guise of merciless killing and bloodlust. A sense of cruelty prevails, bolstered by 'cheering' from the soldiers concerned. I argue this is very significant, and should be taken in the sense accorded to it by Durkheim's (2001) term 'effervescence'. In the present context, this

¹⁴⁴ 27th. October 1899, diary entry, NAM 182-2207.

translates as a state of mind in which a group [the British soldiers] through their communal actions [cheering on the killing of Boers] reinforce their collective sense by giving themselves ‘more confidence, courage and audacity’ (Durkheim 2001:158). In this instance it is a very powerful mechanism which not only strengthens the bond between fighting men but gives validity and meaning to the merciless killing they are inflicting on the enemy. This ‘effervescence’ was greatly exaggerated and came to acquire even greater potency in this battlefield situation, when Normand and the other soldiers ‘cheered lustily’. These are soldiers not cheering for the higher cause of empire but rather celebrating their togetherness as mates in victory. This, in turn, plays its own part in an intense interplay within the highly charged environment of the battlefield (Bourke 2000; Woodward and Winter 2004; Scheff 2006:161-167). What begins like a simple letter home, written to extol the virtuous conduct of military men very quickly turns into a paean to bravery that is little more than a metaphor for wanton violence.

Not all soldiers wanted to engage in these bloody contests, as Private C. A. Saville wrote just after Christmas December 1899¹⁴⁵; ‘It can’t be many days before we have a jolly big fight and I’m afraid a jolly big slaughter’. For him there was no excitement or character contests to be had over coming engagements, his use of the word slaughter reduce them to a ritual of death. For Sergeant Rumbold the killing of so many Boers some weeks earlier had not satiated his frustration, it appeared to have driven his desire to hand out more violence. He records soon after;¹⁴⁶ ‘Things are very trying and the same old things happen every day. If only we could get a little fighting in it would be so much more pleasant for us all ...’. He is careful to include the rest of his men in this comment, to negate any question that this lust to fight is not a collective desire. Rumbold got his wish and Saville’s prediction came true when, on the 6th of January, the Boers made a concerted attack on Ladysmith in a bid to

¹⁴⁵ 28th December 1899, diary entry, NAM1993-09-82.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. diary entry 1st January 1900.

finally end the siege (as detailed in Chapter Four). Rumbold writes later that day, supplying images of the killing of Boers reminiscent of his previous diary entries, where he paints the Boers as sub-humans fit for game to be hunted down, in this way demonstrating their inferiority to the British soldier and their justifiable extermination; ‘The enemy made a combined attack on Ladysmith... At 6.30 [pm]... we fixed swords [bayonets] and rushed ... driving the Boers down the hill and knocking them down like rabbits ...’. The Boers are depicted as not just any game, but rabbits, timorous and easily beaten, it is an image far from the reality that this vicious encounter must have been. Rumbold continues; ‘Several got shot crossing a stream. They would drop in the water spin round a few times and then go floating merrily down ...’. His delight at his troop’s success and the lightness of his language shows a certain dissonance with the actuality of their own violent actions. However, he does make some reference to the bloody carnage he and his soldier mates have been engaged in, but in very noble terms and only to attribute glory to his own company, writing; ‘Thus my own little company helped repulse the Boers on that bloody and memorable day at Ladysmith ...’.

This use of detached language by Rumbold, language that is nonchalant to the point of being completely at odds with the scene he is describing, can be likened to the display of ‘cool’, that has been previously referred to in the chapter, that being masculine and manly dictates (Scheff 2006:161,163, de Visser 2008). Rumbold is using the language of ‘cool’ to locate his bloody action against the Boers in terms of superior detachment. The use of language here is important. Behind the façade of the bloody action he engaged in, Rumbold is sending out a clear and consistent message of his character as a manly warrior who remains unperturbed by the taking of human life. He has shown himself to be in control, he has reinforced his hegemony as a fighter, and he has performed perfectly as the combat warrior script intends him to do. In the act of taking life in battle Rumbold displayed behaviour that endorses the idea, ‘that a man can discover his authentic self by killing or by facing death’

(Rutherford 2005:622). Alternatively, he confirms the suggestion that, in war, ‘many men simply took pleasure in killing’ (Ferguson 1999:358,359). This is a sentiment that has also been expressed by Bourke, that killing in battle ‘invoked intense feelings of pleasure’, (1999:13, 30-33). These are all sentiments that can be identified in Rumbold’s diaries, but the key dynamic in promoting his action I would argue was primarily his sense of shame, brought on by being held helpless in a siege, rendering he and his soldier mates’ warrior image impotent. This lead to feelings of frustration which was able to be released through these encounters in a tumult of bloody combat. It is also significant that the vividly descriptive accounts of bloody encounters with the Boers written by both Rumbold and Hayward display a subtle change to their shorter regular diary entries. It is as if the writing of these accounts allows them to not only relive and in a way revel in their exploits, thereby reinforcing their manly soldier identity but also acts as a performative reinforcement of their masculine identity (Butler 1990).

Rumbold’s clear presentation of his warrior self is arguably an example of hegemonic scripting played out in a pleasurable and exciting manly combat, it cannot be judged as the only response that soldiers had to periods of forced inactivity. It stands in vivid contrast to a comment by G. C. Maidment, a medical orderly who was also at Ladysmith when he writes in his diary¹⁴⁷ how he came across a wounded and visibly weakened soldier who was; ‘scarcely more than a boy – his stalwart form shrunken by illness. He was toying with a spray of wild jasmine, as its perfume brought back vague memories of home ...’. There is a strong contrast between Rumbold bathing in blood and an almost pastoral scene in which a boy soldier plays with a spray of wild jasmine. For Maidment the nobility was not in savage killing but a kind of noble stoicism, which will be addressed in the following chapter. It serves to point up the variety of emotional experiences in the tiny world of British soldiers’

¹⁴⁷ 4th February 1900, diary entry, G.C. Maidment in Chalmers (ed.) (1998:190).

and their emotions and relationships. Up to this point, the responses of the soldiers have been located in the challenge to their own hegemonic masculinity, which for some results in the need to validate their manly credentials generated from a pent up frustration that can only be exorcised through a frenzy of bloodlust and killing. According to Bourke, these actions can actually lessen the psychological damage done by not engaging in combat, as was the case during inactivity imposed by a series of specific conditions (Bourke 1999:248, 249). The unusual length of the sieges gave the perfect theatre for these circumstances to be played out.

6.5 Summary/conclusion:

This chapter has initially focussed on the social context and settings in which soldiers found themselves, it considers how the SAW soldier negotiated relationships with his mates and his officers. The formation of a pseudo family unit became a central feature for ‘Tommy’ and this where friendships and more importantly strong bonds were forged and alliances made. Far from home and his natural family ‘Tommy’ and his mates interacted with familial ease, living, sleeping, and eating together sharing both the material and emotional context of fighting in a war. These strong bonds helped soldiers develop a fierce loyalty to their own army family grouping which would prove to be the lynch pin of soldiers relationship not only to his comrades but in relation to the wider war itself. This close environment at times lent itself to displays of affection between soldiers which are located throughout the narratives used for analysis where the writing of affectionate words to describe a fellow soldier are common. The descriptions and actions of affection however never leave the well defined boundaries of appropriate manly behaviour, staying well within the accepted parameters of homosociality. Officers too were not immune to such bonding and used similar mechanisms to establish and reinforce their relationships with ‘brother officers’.

The reality of war dictates that men who form friendship groups come to rely on each other for emotional and physical survival (Keisling 2005:695). Mates/brother officers sticking

together in difficult situations was another theme developed and the narratives demonstrate and the dependency and regard they have for each other within the defined masculine script. This collective support and camaraderie also materialises in the dealing with attachment and loss on the battlefield where death becomes a silent metaphor for a camaraderie lost. It is very important for many soldiers to recognise their mates death and even another soldiers death as a mark not only of respect but a reinforcement albeit post mortem of the potency of friendship within the army 'family'.

Both 'Tommy' and his officers enjoyed to a large extent mutual respect but depending on the fighting dynamic at the time relations could become fractured and tense. This was not just along the lines of rank but also between ranks as the frustration of the expectations of manly behaviour became more and more challenged. Schisms become apparent and the need to be seen as acting in the manner of a true manly warrior becomes paramount. 'Tommy' and his officers are also critical of those who do not perform up to the manly warrior expectation and those who do not fulfil this manly warrior promise are rooted out, denounced and unmanned. They are no longer fit to have familial loyalty or bonds. The pressure to adopt the manly warrior code and therefore maintain the prevailing hegemonic personae can at times be crushing (Butler 2004).

This need to maintain face (Goffman 2005) in front of your soldier mates takes an exaggerated form for those soldiers who are under immense pressure through being subjected to siege conditions. In this context the SAW soldier has established his mateships or formed alliances with brother officers and now is confronted with a situation which actively restrains him from fighting in combat. When the opportunity does arise then such is the pent up manly frustration that some soldiers go into a savage overdrive which sees them engage in a blood lust carnival of violence. This is the exposition and personification of an extremely aggressive masculinity that is valorised and paraded in front of fellow soldiers as the epitome

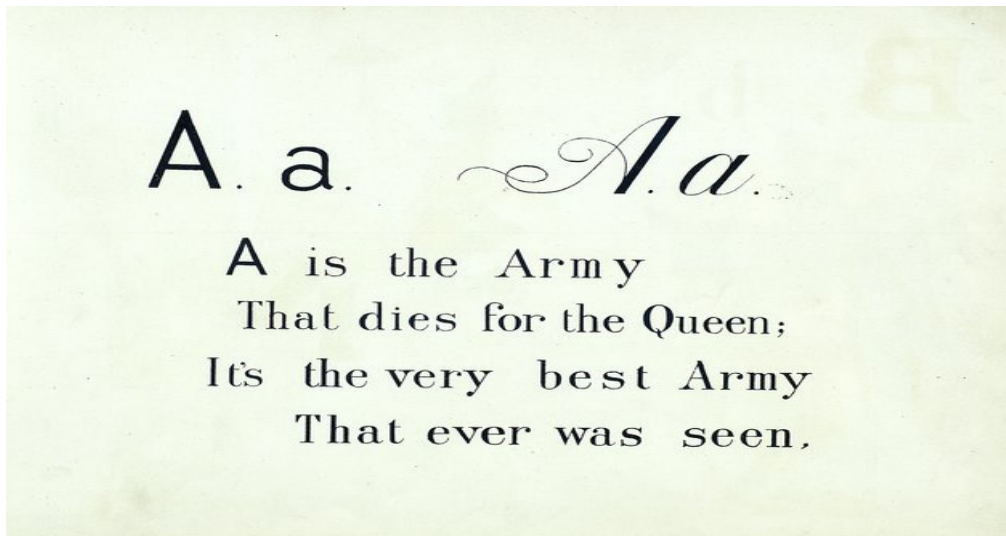
of warrior status (Braudy 2003). The emotional context of fighting in war can become realised in violence and killing but it has a greater resonance than just battlefield slaughter it becomes a pivotal element in notions of honour/dishonour and the ability to publicly bear your privations nobly and with courage. The next chapter will examine these emotional elements more closely.

Fig xiii. Farm Burning



Chapter 7:

‘Stiff upper lip!': the honourable and the dishonourable soldier.



ABC for Baby Patriots – Mrs Ernest Ames¹⁴⁸

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the emotional context of ‘Tommy’ and his officers fighting in the SAW. There was an enduring image that the soldier in the British Army held up values that were superior and purposeful, fighting in the just cause of the Empire (Pakenham 2004). He was represented as emotionless and obedient, this depiction totally in accord with the portrayal of military manliness. Throughout this chapter it will become clear that a simple interpretation of SAW soldiers at war as automata who are ‘just following orders’ will be critically tested as soldiers’ emotions are now analysed as an essential piece of the overall fabric of war. Two elements of military masculinity will be core to the analysis; stoicism and honour/dishonour. Both of these elements are embedded in the manly code of behaviour for

¹⁴⁸ Ames, Ernest Mrs (1899) ‘ABC for Baby Patriots’, Dean & Son, London see Appendix 4.

soldiers at war in this period. Stoicism I argue is a key marker for what Woodward and Winter (2004:289) call 'emotional toughness' in the military and is manifest in many soldiers narratives. Stoicism becomes a dominant idealised expression of military masculinity (Barrett 1996). Also within this context of the SAW soldiers emotional experience and reality is bound up with notions of honour/dishonour that was near sacred reverence for the prosecution of military masculinity which are intimately linked to the expression of a military masculinity (Reeser 2010:173).

Manly men and soldiers were expected to bear the hardship of war with a stoic 'stiff upper lip', encouraged to be aggressive warriors (Downes 2005:5) who acted within an honourable code of behaviour idealised and epitomised in a Victorian model of civilised warfare that was inculcated from the literature and comic books of early childhood (Beynon 2002:32). Both these conditions meant that soldiers were not only constantly battling the Boers but their inner emotional selves. The stoic soldier will be the first subject of this chapter followed by an examination of how honour/dishonour becomes a very important factor in the SAW soldiers emotional make up.

7.2 Stoicism

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears

Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

(William Ernest Henley 1849-1902).

It is to that marker of Victorian manliness and soldierliness – stoicism – that the chapter now turns. The poem illustrates the kind of stoicism expected from the SAW soldier. Whatever horror he might face he would stand firm, he would call on his personal strengths, for it would be a sign of weakness, an unmaning to do otherwise. Henley's poem carries with it the sense of individual responsibility that the SAW soldier was to shoulder for his behaviour and how he and he alone was to be stoic in the face of adversity.

Emotional fortitude and self control were also closely linked into the performance of the stoic manly ideal, needing to be displayed even in the most personal of situations, in particular taking leave of friends and family. For some individuals the SAW was a welcome opportunity to leave home and fight in a war that would test their masculinity and the severance of ties from home were for some fairly straightforward. Private Walter Putland of the 2nd Middlesex regiment records dispassionately his disembarkation from Southampton, writing in casual terms;¹⁴⁹ 'Troops in good spirits singing shouting and pleasant farewells by the Quay. Splendid weather sea like a sea of glass [...].' Others, like Private J. Willoughby of the Durham Light Infantry, on leaving *his* England from his home in Hartlepool wrote

¹⁴⁹ 2nd. December 1899, diary entry, NAM 1981-07-18.

down a far more emotional response;¹⁵⁰ ‘Left Tynemouth [after leaving Hartlepool] on the 9.30 train for Southampton arrived there about 11am... Set sail about 2.30pm losing sight of old England as darkness sets in.’ Willoughby not only records the pathos of ‘losing sight of old England’ but underscores this with the arrival of darkness. Such language serves to heighten the twin emotions of loss and belonging. Not only is there the possible wrench of leaving home and breaking the intimate bond he has with his family, but we can also discern a reinforcement of the manly emotional and patriotic bond with his mother country, England. This picture illustrates the emotional upheaval of some of the departing troops, where farewells were expected to be conducted in a controlled manner that subscribed to the stoic manly script. Gunner John Archibald of the Elswick Battery (1st Northumberland Volunteer Artillery) records his quite poignant leaving of Newcastle-upon-Tyne¹⁵¹:

We left dear old Newcastle on [~~struck out~~] Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Tuesday as we Northerners call it in three special troop trains and many sad farewells took place that day on the platform of the Central Station between Fathers, Mothers, Wives and Sweethearts [~~struck out~~] and the men of the Battery. But the Artillery men bore the sad partings like men [...].

Unlike Walter Putland, who recorded pleasant farewells on Southampton Quay, John Archibald captures the very heart of the dilemma that soldiers faced when they left for the front, the need to save face and present a manly image, not only to loved ones but to the rest of the troops present this reveals how the mask of manliness must have been a heavy disguise to perform. The naming of all the loved ones in the station, fathers, mothers, wives, and sweethearts reinforces just how difficult it was for the soldiers to bear their, ‘sad partings like men’.

¹⁵⁰ 22nd. February 1900, diary entry, DLI Acc:2939 (D) Box 1/42.

¹⁵¹ 21st. February 1900, letter, TWAS DX 924/1.

In November 1899, George Maidment¹⁵² was working at the military hospital at Intombi that was attached to Ladysmith and was often targeted by the Boers' 'Long Tom' cannon. Much of what Maidment writes relates to his hospital work. In a diary entry he tells of the stoicism of a wounded officer:

This morning Lieut. F. G. Egerton was grievously wounded by a shell whilst fighting with H.M.S. Powerful's guns & was subsequently admitted into my ward, both the brave Officers legs were missing yet he showed no trace of agony he must have suffered & in brief conversation he remarked (both my feet are cold) thus showing the impression that his legs were still intact was fixed upon his mind.

Maidment is eager to interpret this scene as illustrating the stoicism of the officer rather than accepting that he may not have been fully conscious and aware of his situation, instead he wants to emphasise the manly 'silent suffering' of the soldier. The incident that Maidment refers to is also recorded by Lieutenant Lionel Halsey who writes to his mother:¹⁵³

...I regret to say we lost our Gunnery Lieutenant [Egerton]; he had a charge of the other 4.7 [cannon] we brought up, and while they were firing a Boer shell came in and struck him, shattering one leg and smashing up the other. He was so plucky about it, and just remarked as they were putting him on the stretcher, 'I'm afraid this will do for my cricket'. He lit a cigarette while being carried down [to hospital].

The almost casual reference to his cricket playing graphically depicts how well ingrained playing the game with a 'stiff upper lip' was. The manly 'poise' that Goffman (1990) refers to actually was only eclipsed by the seemingly nonchalant lighting of the cigarette as he is carried away on a stretcher. This was soldier unbowed by pain and displaying extraordinary stoic behaviour where the playing out of manly stoicism in front of the audience of other soldiers in a plainly horrendous situation was of paramount importance. This 'silent suffering' and in Egerton's case above and beyond the call of stoic behaviour is a

¹⁵² 14th February 1900, diary entry, G.C. Maidment, in Chalmers (1998:37).

¹⁵³ Lieutenant Lionel Halsey, Bridgland, T. (1998) 'Field Gun Jack versus the Boers: The Royal Navy in South Africa 1899-1900' pp. 42-43.

personification and key aspect of hegemonic masculinity (Jones 2006:463). It was also reflected in the way some soldiers recorded and referred to their wounds, Private Lewis¹⁵⁴ mentions what must have been a painful wound almost casually:

Face still bad and swollen. Had to go to the doctor to get a bit of a bullet taken out. Bad for two days but soon got better. Grazing horses every day & take gun out twice a week for exercise. Altogether a fine old time here, living up to date, grand food, feather beds.

Lewis is obviously still in discomfort from his wound, but he does not emphasise this and counters it with an impression of easy times. Although he wants to write about his wound, he can only do so when he juxtaposes it with an air of dismissal, putting on a stoic front ensuring that his remarks fit in with the expectation of a manly warrior. Major Power's¹⁵⁵ stoic response is to make a casual almost mocking approach to his wound:

Better today, had pretty close call. Bullet went in close to my ear in cheek, and came out side of my skull, luckily it was a Mauser. Wilson says, I have no brains, or I should have been done.

For those soldiers who showed emotional toughness there was the greatest admiration, they represented the manly ideal that could be looked up to and admired. Captain Dallimore¹⁵⁶ in February 1901 entry writes admiringly of one of his men:

Corp Irvine...made a splendid stand he was hit in the shoulder, the arm and the leg and all one side of his tunic and pants has no less than 9 bullet holes in them and still he fought on...Irvine is certainly one of the pluckiest chaps one could wish to meet an all round good man.

The style and language Dallimore uses makes no reference to the pain and reality of the soldier being shot but refers to the stoic emotional response of Irvine to the situation he is in.

¹⁵⁴ 16th January 1901, diary entry, NAM 1999-12-125.

¹⁵⁵ 13th September 1900, diary entry, NAM 8303-1213.

¹⁵⁶ 7th February 1901, diary entry, PRO 1379.

Dallimore does not label this an outstanding act of ‘bravery’ but identifies Irvine as a chap who has successfully fulfilled the expectations of manly stoicism.

The SAW soldier was destined for fighting and the reality of combat meant that the soldier had to go much further than project the warrior image: he was expected to retain an emotional strength and resolve. During intense combat, fighting could be extremely ferocious reinforcing for some soldiers the expected close association between manliness and what has been called the ‘primal ferocity of the battlefield’ (Deane 2008:211). Boer firepower could be murderous, but to some soldiers that only made their fighting efforts more laudable. This sensation of heavy enemy firepower helped depict the circumstances in which warrior manliness excelled, and the accompanying emotional rhetoric plays on images of a relentless cloud of bullets laden with the violent reality of potential death. In these circumstances the ability to remain emotionally detached was to some soldiers necessary in effectively playing out the warrior ideal. In a series of diary entries, Trooper D. M. Stewart captures in a very matter of fact way the force and relentlessness of the combat into which the British soldier had to march¹⁵⁷:

23/8/1900 Heavy fighting... one man wounded.

24/8/1900 Rifle fire... Heavy firing all day... A lot buried.

25/8/1900 Heavy firing.

26/8/1900... Bullets very thick.

27/8/1900 Watched Devons and Enniskillens enter trenches with fixed bayonets casualties heavy.

This apparent emotional detachment was however not always how the SAW soldier portrayed his fighting prowess: the intimidating density of enemy firepower could induce in the soldier’s heart a far different emotional reaction to the one adopted by the front-of-stage manly warrior. In another series of diary entries from Corporal Hammond, we see a different

¹⁵⁷ 23rd – 27th. August 1900, diary entries, C.L.I.P.

side of the combatant who goes into battle with a powerful enemy. Hammond paints a picture that challenges the image of the unfaltering and indomitable manly warrior. Here he is, facing enemy fire for the first time¹⁵⁸:

June 26th 1900 Met the Boers about sunrise had a sharp skirmish... this is my first time under fire it seemed very queer.

June 27th 1900 Skirmishing all day... had a hot five minutes... Boers fired on us all the time... don't want to go through it again.

July 2nd 1900 the mausers are popping the bullets are whistling everywhere.

July 7th 1900 Rifles blazing by thousands.

July 8th The country for miles... set on fire by the shells.

July 24th Trooper Nicholas... was shot dead today... Tothill... Moore are shot through the body... not expected to live. Tate Thorn... Catchlove are wounded ... it's the worst day we have had yet.

Amidst the cacophony of bullets, shells and death, Hammond is less in harmony with the glory that the manly warrior could attain and is immersed more in the bloody experience of fighting. This is a brutally raw reality that exposes and corrupts the image of the manly warrior as a willing sacrificial hero. The fragility of the soldier both mentally and physically in combat was a frequent lived experience of the SAW and that essence of vulnerability of the human being in conflict would be echoed in the carnage of the battle fields of the Somme during World War I a little over a decade later (Bourke 1999).

The aftermath of battle also required a stoic reaction to the horrors experienced and the expectations of fellow soldiers and officers was high. Private Harry Phipps¹⁵⁹ records a journey to hospital in a horse drawn wagon that was being pulled over rough terrain:

The jolting of the wagon affected the wounds and half suppressed shrieks issued from our lips at every jolt [...] One poor fellow next to me has his leg splintered by a shell, big tears streamed down his face with the agony he was undergoing, but never a word

¹⁵⁸ 26th June 1900, diary entry, PRO 0775.

¹⁵⁹ 22nd November 1899, diary entry, NAM 1983-02-15.

of complaint passed his lips he knew and we knew that the proper ambulances were needed for men more badly hurt than us [...] Two engineer officers which was there enquired the reason why we were getting refreshments, & immediately proceeded to swig into a bottle of whiskey [...] We had been fighting for more or less two days & had half a dog biscuit to eat and then the loss of blood besides [...] Such men they ruin the service.

Phipps account captures how men expected to ascribe to stoic behaviour even in the most challenging of situations. Having to suppress shrieks of pain epitomises the manly need not to show any weakness (Kimmel 1987). The evocation shedding of *big* tears silently by the wounded soldier on the wagon not only paints this scene in stark colours through an act of manly behaviour on the part of the wounded man, but starkly juxtaposes his behaviour against the two engineer officers. His vivid detail of the event and description of the pain suffered by the men is in sharp contrast to the quiet dismissal of his wounds by Private Lewis and the almost romantic view of silent suffering held by George Maidment. It is as if he needs to acknowledge and make record of the emotional stoicism of himself and his comrades in the face of the disregard of the officers.

The ultimate display of stoic manly credentials came as the wounded soldier faced breathing his last. Captain P.H. Normand¹⁶⁰ refers to this ideal of the silent wounded in a letter to his father:

Another real good chap who was killed [...] had eight wounds in him, but lived for 24 hours after that. He never complained a little bit and bore his pain which really must have been terrible without a murmur [...].

This bearing of unvoiced pain highlights how wounded soldiers, even as they are dying, adhered to the manly warrior script and, in order to deal with their desperate situations, ‘clothed themselves in a mantle of stoicism’ (Bourke 1999:77). Maidment writes in another

¹⁶⁰ 16th. January 1900, letter, NAM 1998-02-207.

diary entry¹⁶¹, once more interpreting the circumstances using the language of manly stoicism:

I visited the Manchesters on Caesar's Camp, and the poor fellows that furnished outposts and fatigue parties every day for four weary months looked done up, is it any wonder that they are the most ragged, most weather stained, and most unkempt crowd who ever played the part of soldiers. There is not a whole garment among them. They are ill fed and overworked yet they go to an extra duty cheerfully knowing that their general has faith in their watchfulness & grit [...] All honour to them! Like 'the dirty half-hundred' of Peninsula fame, they have been too busy to wash and mend.

Maidment interprets the scene that confronts him through the prism of stoicism, in highlighting the privations experienced by the soldiers he paints a picture of mythical manliness where despite many privations the soldiers remain cheerful and dutiful.

In his diary entry, Private Walter Abbot¹⁶² gives a contrasting view of a similar situation to that drawn by Maidment:

This is starvation column, we are nearly all bones now...The niggars are better looked after than us & gets just 3 times as much pay[...].

Here there is no cheery stoicism, just an almost resentful response to the harsh conditions that his column had to endure and demonstrates a splintering of the stoic ideal. Maidment is still eager to promote the essence of stoic behaviour that became so much the hallmark of the Victorian manly persona. It was the ultimate in what Goffman (1990) would describe as 'impression management' as discussed earlier in Chapter Two, where presentation of the manly self was predicated on self reliance and poise. This persona was acted out both for an audience at home, for whom it was recorded in diaries and letters, and more immediately displayed for soldier mates, all of whom shared similar experiences, albeit to different degrees of hardship. This is how stoicism came to be interpreted during the SAW, playing an

¹⁶¹ 14th. February 1900, diary entry, G.C. Maidment, in Chalmers (1998:37).

¹⁶² 22nd. June 1901, diary entry, NAM 1992-08-335.

important role when ‘Tommy’ and his officers were put under the most demanding of circumstances – circumstances which would gravely test their manliness.

Sergeant Henry Facer writes in his diary;¹⁶³ ‘Shelling from daylight till dusk, enemy firing at anything visible [...]’. The Boer shelling was intended as much to break down the spirit of those under fire as to cause death and injury; but for some of the ‘Tommys’, their stoicism in the face of everyday danger was central to their survival, as Facer continues; ‘one would not credit how Tommy Atkins behaves during the time that shells are flying about. Laughing, cracking jokes, singing [...]’. He goes on:

We have christened the enemy’s guns each having a different sound as it whistles through the air. Long Tom, Creeping Jenny, Frenchie, Sausage machine, Silent Susan, Spitfire Jack are some of the names. The garrison is keeping good heart [...].

Sergeant Facer and his soldier mates try to humanise the bombardment by naming the individual guns that are firing on them; this diminishes the constant threat of death by reducing the potency of the Boer guns and rendering them less of a threat (Bourke 1999:73). This is one way in which the soldiers maintained the collective stoic spirit among themselves. Some of ‘Tommy’s’ officers also idealised his stoicism as shown by Captain Normand when he writes to his father;¹⁶⁴ ‘Tommy Atkins is a gallant chap and I don’t think easily disheartened [...]’.

Nonetheless however good the ‘banter’ was between ‘Tommys’, it was not the only response to war conditions. The soldiers’ writings also record an unadorned reality that illustrates how the stoic ideal was not always played out. In his account of the intense fighting at Wagon Hill Sergeant Rumbold writes¹⁶⁵ of a soldier called Gilbert who, when shot; ‘shouted and kicked’ and, when shot again; ‘got mad with the pain. [In order to end his own suffering]He stood up bared his chest and challenged the Boers to shoot him [...]’. This

¹⁶³ 16th November 1899, diary entry, NAM 1998-06-178.

¹⁶⁴ 16th January 1900, letter, NAM 1998-02-207.

¹⁶⁵ 15th January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1977-11-8.

does not fit the stoic forbearance expected as suffering was to borne in silence, and, as if to distance himself from it, Rumbold goes on to describe the stoic behaviour of his; ‘own little company’ who remained steady and on duty all night in cold, wet conditions even though; ‘there was blood all over the rocks; we were also falling over dead men as we walked about in the dark [...]’.

Although it was the stock in trade of the Victorian soldier, stoicism was not experienced uniformly among the fighting men. In many of the writings, the seemingly sturdy stoicism of the British ‘Tommy’ was starting to waver, as Private T. Bramwell writes to his wife;¹⁶⁶ ‘My word since the 21st of September we have been surrounded by the enemy [...] I am finished with the army after this [...] I hope to God we are relieved by Saturday but I am afraid there will be another fight [...]’.

The siege situations that some found themselves held in were the cause of some particular embarrassment, as Captain Balfour writes to his father;¹⁶⁷ ‘Dear Papa I’m keeping wonderfully fit and well but it’s awfully dull and tedious work and so infernally ignominious to be boxed up here[...]’. The shame and embarrassment of being besieged by a ‘bunch of farmers’ was an affront to those ideals of being a manly warrior. Hegemonic military manliness was being challenged through a process of humiliation, and stoicism was one way to counter that challenge (New 2001:741). Implicit demands are made on the SAW soldier to maintain stoicism and, as important, to be seen to be stoic. As a senior officer, Balfour hastens to qualify his letter to his mother by saying; ‘of course this is only to you I say this for it’s not the thing to do except take the rosiest view of the whole situation [...]’. Writing in his diary Captain Normand¹⁶⁸ endorses these sentiments by stating; ‘the C. O. [Commanding Officer] requested the regiment to exercise care in writing letters and reports to their friends and relations and specially request that all letters should end by a request that they were not

¹⁶⁶ 18th January 1900, letter, NAM 1983-12-87.

¹⁶⁷ 24th November 1899, letter, NAM 1996-03-36.

¹⁶⁸ 12th February 1900, diary entry, NAM 1998-02-207.

to put in print.’ The imperative to present a united response to the world at large was strong, creating an environment where to question the stoic stance was actively discouraged. Despite this he enters into the spirit of wavering stoicism:¹⁶⁹

The following has been received from Field Marshall Lord Roberts, Commander in Chief in South Africa, “[...] I beg you will yourself accept and offer all those serving under your command, my warmest congratulations on the heroic and splendid defence you have made”. This is very gratifying to all of us but at the same time we all hope that the “heroic and splendid defence” won’t have to last much longer.

There was none more eloquent than Charles Maidment, who continued to subscribe to this ideal of Victorian military manliness throughout his writings at Ladysmith. In his diary of 3 March, 1901¹⁷⁰ at the end of the siege, he writes:

But it is a story which is brilliant in brave deeds, which tells of danger boldly faced of noble self-sacrifice to duty, in calm endurance of many and growing evils. – it’s a story worth telling.

Once the sieges in the SAW were lifted, the stoicism of the soldiers was promoted and celebrated, the ignominy of being held under siege by the Boers was reframed as the military archetype and an ultimate test of manliness (Bruley 2005:469).

It was however not just the sieges that witnessed the stoicism of SAW soldiers it was throughout the war and the manly virtue of stoicism continued to be promoted and admired but the emotional toughness that was a prerequisite became ever more challenged as soldiers faced situations that would question their code of honour causing for some internal emotional conflict .

¹⁶⁹ 29th January 1900, diary entry, NAM 1977-11-8.

¹⁷⁰ 3rd March 1901, diary entry, G.C. Maidment in Chalmers (1998:26).

7.3 The honourable and dishonourable:

Say, what is Honour? 'Tis the finest sense
Of 'justice' which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation...
(William Wordsworth 1770 – 1850)

Wordsworth's poem evokes how powerful an emotion the sense of honour can be and how honour can become a desirable condition of human interaction with war. As the SAW continues there begins to appear a change in the soldiers' writings. Initially they had written of both the glory and the reality of battle, or the endurance and privations of British troops during the sieges. The expectations of the new recruits to the war are summed up by Trooper Noble Jones¹⁷¹ when he writes home in February 1900, at the beginning of the conflict:

...this racket will soon be over the treachery of the enemy is quite true and firing on the ambulance hospital anything they can see they are cruel not only that they are cowards abuse women & children and no man would do that not in the British Service for it would not be allowed if I ever get another chance I will have satisfaction[...].

Here was the articulation of the manly warrior code of honour, the emotional indignation and certainty of the British Army's adherence to this. He is determined that he would stand and protect women and children, distancing himself from the barbaric Boer behaviour.

As the war progressed the British soldier was forced to confront a range of situations that resulted in him experiencing a range of conflicting emotions. On the one hand there were expectations that such a soldier was a brave and honourable servant of the military who

¹⁷¹ 9th February 1900, letter, C.L.I.P.

displayed all the attributes of the manly imperial soldier (Goldstein 2006:269); on the other, he was with a reluctant witness to acts of disappointment and dishonour that disgusted him and made him feel ashamed of not only his comrades but himself as an imperial soldier and as a man. Throughout the war, his writings articulate these mixed feelings, and start to include richer detail of everyday occurrences; in this way, they give us a greater opportunity for insight into their *weltanschauung* of idealized honourable manly behaviour.

There was an expectation that comrades would act honourably and stand together in the face of the enemy, any sign of shirking was condemned and the failings in behaviour would be labelled in the strongest of terms. George Moody¹⁷² writes in a letter home of a difficult situation facing his Troop. They are very short of officers, having only five whereas when they left Kroonstad they had twenty three. Three sergeants found their health so bad that they had to leave and one man, Sergeant Bryson, pretended to be ill in order to be left behind:

My thoughts are all on the march tomorrow it will be grand if we are able to take part in de Wets capture it will be very cowardly of Bryson if he goes into hospital which he can easily manage by putting it off to the last, as we march at 5AM and the doctor does not see patients till 9AM Hegg will have to take his place and I will be the only sergeant and therefore never off duty on the march or in the camp[...].

For Moody this behaviour is totally unacceptable, he emphasises this by detailing how it could be easily avoided, Bryson has not followed the honourable manly script and gone in support of his mates therefore there is only one way to interpret his behaviour, that of coward. Lieutenant Cummings in a letter home January 1900 is also disgusted; ‘...in my ward there are eight men...two or three here are “doing a sham” so as to be kept back from the front’. In the early stages of the war soldiers considered the honourable behaviour of ‘others’, but as it progressed they had to look inwards and begin to judge their own behaviour.

¹⁷² 7th October 1900, letter, PRONI 1454/1.

7.4 Just following orders?

The challenge to imperial soldiering that materialises when a man finds himself caught up in acts that he finds abhorrent, can lead him to emotional turmoil that calls into question the trope of manliness asserted through service as a soldier serving as an agent of the British Empire. War usually provides a context in which following orders hardly seems contentious. Throughout the whole of the SAW, however, and during the unprecedented ‘scorched earth’ policy in particular, obeying orders became extremely hard to fulfil for some soldiers.

During for example ‘scorched earth’ every Boer civilian who was associated with men on commando could find himself or herself arrested and detained in a concentration camp by British soldiers. This inhuman side of the war provided an alien setting outside the moral compass of honourable manly soldiering. Here, soldiers and civilians confronted each other in highly charged circumstances. Boer civilians, including women, children and babies, had now been thrust into the furnace of war; this meant that soldiers now had to prosecute the war in a manner that was both politically controversial and personally challenging. There had been no preparation for this. Such actions stood in violent contradiction to everything that stood for manly warrior combat, whose code of honour insisted that fighting should take place between equals. The rules of engagement had changed, and the SAW soldier appeared to be adapting to these changes. This was a time when the routine of soldiering had become associated with acts that previously might have appalled those who now carried them out. However, duty and obedience were fundamental markers of the manly SAW soldier, and following orders was his first and foremost obligation to his commanders; but the question must still be asked: did obedience to orders always go without either challenge or emotional response? The *key* question however is whether the SAW soldier had become more at ease with everything that this policy entailed? Had his personal journey through the war led him to

be become more and more brutalised by how the war was being prosecuted? Or was it simply as Lieutenant James Craig¹⁷³ wrote to his friend Harvey just before Christmas 1900; ‘burning farms... monotonous work... I [indecipherable] just want home for Christmas’.

Throughout the war Boer commandos were given support that enabled them to continue to take the fight to the British. This came in two main parts, either through food and supplies taken directly from the countryside or in the form of strong emotional support from their families and loved ones. Part of the British strategy, implemented from June 1900, was to choke the supply of food to the Boers on commando by destroying it; this was usually achieved by setting fire to farmsteads and destroying all the crops, forage and foodstuffs that could be found in them. Occasionally in the soldiers’ writings we can find evidence of emotional turmoil at these actions. Corporal H.G. Lawrence records¹⁷⁴; ‘Set fire to a Boer farm, a fine little place, couldn’t help it, [the Boers] firing from it under cover of a white flag’. For him there was a justification in this act, therefore the responsibility lay with the Boers themselves. In other diary entries there is greater ambivalence, as Private H.J. Lewis writes¹⁷⁵; ‘Rested to destroy all farms and burnt some real beauties’. In the majority of the writings there is a hesitant silence around the burning of the farms, and we can find no real emotional response, just a normalisation of routine. Private J. E. Clegg also writes¹⁷⁶ as follows; ‘fighting early morning destroying crops and farms for the rest of the day’. In the case of Corporal G.S. Botwright¹⁷⁷ he was at least able to give some rationale for the destruction of the farms in the following comment; ‘We finishes up burning all their farms within a five mile radius so that [the Boers on commando] had nothing to return to’. There was more to clearing the land than just burning farms and destroying crops. The SAW soldier was also charged with making arrests by taking the Boer civilians off the veldt and

¹⁷³ 1st. December 1900, letter, PRONI D/1415.

¹⁷⁴ 23rd. April 1900, diary entry, NAM 2002-08-114.

¹⁷⁵ 3rd. September 1901, diary entry, NAM 1999-12-125.

¹⁷⁶ 10th. May 1902, diary entry, NAM 1992-07-92.

¹⁷⁷ 13th. September 1901, diary entry, NAM 2005-07-773.

imprisoning them in concentration camps – places that were gaining a reputation as places of horror (Pakenham 2004:503-511). Would this intervention at a more human level prove a challenge to the individual's personal ideal of soldierly honour by triggering an emotional reaction which in turn would invite him to question the legitimacy of his actions?

There were no signs of a change of heart when it came to the practice in which soldiers were brought face to face with more human values: arresting civilians. In a series of diary entries, Major J.E. Pine-Coffin makes plain his own absolute commitment to the rules:

8th August 1900 Patrols out all day, I intend to make a complete clearance of the country, both men and women [to be arrested].

31st October 1900 Any amount of women and children came in last night, they had to sleep in open cattle trucks.

5th November 1900 Boers still in the neighbourhood. Removing all the Dutch & burning their houses, I have got rid of a good many... Am furnishing room very well.

26th November Brought in several more Dutch women and a few men... Burnt a spies house & took spy, his wife had not time to get her clothes on.

There is a distinct repetition to how Pine-Coffin manages his unemotional commentary on the arrests he details. There is no apparent emotional response from the Major; but there is a flat repetition of the pattern of arrests, indicative of a soldier who carries out his orders without question. Refusing to allow a Boer woman time to put her clothes on, shows to what extent the honourable rules governing the treatment of women have been put in abeyance. Pine-Coffin emerges as a perfect imperial soldier, performing his duties with a professional fighter's dedication (Goldstein 2006:267).

The honourable warrior now appears either to have been recreated as an emotionally inert automaton or to have been raised to a level of emotional display that is now perfectly tuned to displays of manly composure and emotional control (Scheff 2006:162). The repetitive, almost mundane nature of the way in which Pine Coffin records his actions and

their execution helps reify Butler's (1990) concept of performativity, in which she illustrates how the routine activities in which individuals repeatedly engage help to reinforce the status quo of the established hegemonic order of masculinity. At such times, there appears for some to be little or no emotional tension between what is being done in the prosecution of the war and the individual soldier's inner emotional self. The hegemony of masculine self-assertion remains intact. Where there once was an imperial soldier imbued with manly values, a 'proper' man who adhered to a code of honour, there now appears an ill-defined model of manliness, silent emotionally passive. There was evidence now that 'Tommy' and his officers were increasingly through routinely destructive work of the SAW being reduced as honourable soldiers to emotionless and emotionally disembodied barbarians. This apparent erosion of honourable behaviour is scrutinised further still in the following sections which consider soldiers emotional responses to women in the SAW, criminal behaviour in the form of looting and arguably the ultimate embodiment of criminally dishonourable behaviour; murdering children.

7.5 Gentlemen there are ladies present!

The SAW soldier was operating in a social era that although subordinated women also accorded them the right to be treated with honour (Hall et al 2000). Military masculinity and manliness depend on the creation of a subjugated feminine 'other' (Goldstein 2006:257). For Krebs (2004: 81), 'Even in the homosocial system of war, women or the idea of women must have an important place'. In the SAW women were present either as a contingent of the Boer enemy, as indigenous blacks, or more rarely as officer's wives. Male attitudes to women, specifically the SAW soldier are worthy of critical comment as such attitudes are written about in many soldiers' narratives. It is within the gendered fabric of imperial masculinity that soldiers perform and act out their manliness by 'doing gender' (Butler 1990).

Representations of gender and the subordination of the feminine to the masculine are also integral to imperial manliness (Krebs 2004).

Judging by their statements, SAW soldiers came to define women in very specific ways although the majority of their narrative comments were directed towards Boer women. When it came to writing about the officer's wives and the women who accompanied them there was an expected code of honourable behaviour to be followed, Colonel De Salis¹⁷⁸ in a letter to his wife shows his disapproval when this is not followed:

Captain Mawhinney is in charge...he is very much a mans man...Had he [Mawhinney] talked to my wife like I heard him talk to Mrs Downing before her husband [officer] and a lot of junior subalterns I'd have kicked him...God bless you my darling may this new century be a brighter one for you and I.

Although De Salis censures Mawhinney's behaviour the sanction he proposes is not too severe, the excuse being that he is a man's man, therefore unused to the refinement required by women. He emphasises his own sensitivity by the tender emotional end to his letter.

Although some officer's wives did accompany their husbands, they would usually remain behind the lines, near the staff headquarters. There was a belief held by many of the soldiers that war was no place for a woman, those that did get involved transgressed their status. In August 1900 Major Power¹⁷⁹ shows his impatience at the officers' wives who followed their husbands:

...Mrs Blair, Mrs Ned Blair [officer's wife] and another came by train yesterday. Why on earth don't you keep these assess of women at home, and such plain headed ones too! Women are all very well in their place & that's not running after an army[...].

¹⁷⁸28th. December 1899, letter, NAM 1990-07-120.

¹⁷⁹28th. August 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

The idea that war is not a place for a woman would have repercussions in the treatment of Boer women. Major Power signals how attitudes to Boer women would develop; those who behaved in an ‘unwomanly’ manner, in particular by supporting and fighting with their Boer husbands would lose their right to be treated honourably. He also makes reference to Mrs Blair and her companion’s physical appearance, they are plain, and self reliant and as such do not fit his ideal of submissive genteel women, deserving of the protection of honourable men.

It appeared that if women fulfilled the criteria that soldiers had of feminine attractiveness, they could also *beguile* the British officer and could still appeal to his manly sense of chivalry and honourable behaviour. Writing again in his diary, Major Power’s records¹⁸⁰ shows his visiting a Boer household:

I came to a house where there was a fine flock of geese, also at the house, a fine flock of daughters. I was after the geese!! But one pretty lassie persuaded me to have some [food]... Quite a nice girl, I suggested she marry me, and come with me to ‘my castle’ in England; she seemed quite willing. The end of it was, I had to go somewhere else for my geese, for how could I rob a defenceless woman and children!!

Although attractiveness is a factor here, the women are also fulfilling a traditional deferential role, and in this case making them worthy of his protection. Power in the end appears to respond to the powerful emotion of not doing harm to women or children who in the hierarchy of honourable behaviour are placed in the vulnerable category in need of protection from the manly soldier and not subjected to any damage or abuse.

What is most striking in all the writings examined and almost deafening is the lack of any reference to the physical or sexual abuse of women by soldiers. This is perhaps not too surprising, given the audience the writings might have reached, but it is nevertheless a strange phenomenon, a missing piece of the jigsaw of military behaviour in the war. The diary entry

¹⁸⁰ 6th June 1901, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

by Sergeant H.E. Facer¹⁸¹ is the only reference I have found that refers to the abuse of women:

After Church Parade today Lord Dundonald gave us a lecture owing to some men trying to molest Dutch women who were in a Laager down in the valley not far from camp, informing us he would sentence to death any man who was found guilty of molestation.

However in encounters where the Boer women did not reach the soldiers' standards of pulchritude or failed to follow the feminine code by showing submissiveness, the writings show a hardened attitude towards them, for not all encounters were amiable. The British soldiers began *to* clearly classify their encounters with the Boer women along the lines of a Madonna/Whore dichotomy (Lloyd 1995) where women were classified as fulfilling two very definable types, one the 'Madonna' was virtuous, subordinated, good and worthy of being treated honourably; and the other, the 'Whore' behaved in such a way that she was not deemed to be real woman and as such being treated honourably was not necessary. In his diary Private W. Fessey¹⁸² shows how this game was played. He writes; '...we soon set their farms on a blaze. There were several women at these houses but we burnt their place down... I never saw such a rough lot of women together before'.

The appearance of the Boer women being depicted 'rough' allows Fessey to rationalise their treatment, they do not comply with the ideal standard of womanhood *and* are therefore robbed of the right of being treated honourably. This will also justify and rationalise any dishonourable treatment meted out to them. 'Tommy' and his officers were making their actions immune from the charge of dishonourable behaviour. Boer women could be portrayed as unfeminine by their mannish behaviour, especially if they emulated Boer

¹⁸¹ 16th September 1900, diary entry, NAM 1998-06-178.

¹⁸² 1st August 1901, diary entry, Private W. Fessey, Wilson H. (ed.) 1998.

soldiers. Private W. Abbott writes¹⁸³ of an incident in which he and his fellows chased off a Boer commando; ‘300 got away[...] several women with them who was riding horses astride same as a man’. The sitting astride a horse demarcated the women from other women who with the probity of [sic.] proper femininity would sit ‘side saddle’ as model women would. This may also have allowed for the possibility of engaging the Boer women on commando in combat which ordinarily would be unfathomable. One of the most vehement outbursts decrying Boer womanhood came from Lieutenant Power in correspondence with his mother¹⁸⁴:

Some of our Boer ladies refused to get out of the wagons and had to be helped out!
How I hate them, nasty, ugly, spiteful wretches, worse by far than the men, and no womanly ways at all.

This is in stark contrast to his comments made six months earlier where he was flirting with the pretty deferential daughters of a Boer Farmer. He has reframed his code of honour in a way that allows him to justify his own actions and retain an emotional balance. By demonizing the Boer women’s behaviour as unfeminine or ‘Whore-like’ the British soldier allows himself to be emotionally disconnected with them and by doing so justify any dishonourable behaviour towards them. ‘Tommy’ and his officers’ dishonourable behaviour depended on the successful labelling of these Boer women as performing in a way that men would (Butler 1990) and consequently, ‘most different from [other] women’ (Holter 2006:262). The abiding impression given by the SAW soldier is that women, especially pretty women, were only real women if they fulfilled the socio-culturally defined script of womanhood (O’Neill 2007:468). Any woman who engaged in behaviour that took her outside the parameters of how the soldiers thought she should behave was, by that very fact, rendered sexually neutral. In their own minds, this absolved the soldiers from any harsh

¹⁸³ 15th July 1901, diary entry, NAM 1992-08-335.

¹⁸⁴ 6th December 1900, letter, NAM 1983-03-12.

treatment that they meted out to such a woman; the soldiers were freed from the chivalric code because the women they dealt with had voluntarily left the borders of real womanhood¹⁸⁵. It was extremely important for soldiers to present to onlookers (real or imaginary) through their narratives an unblemished manly self, a persona for others to admire, one that was emotionally secure and intact.

7.6 Looting!

There is also evidence that the SAW soldier was beginning to engage in criminal behaviour that contradicted the soldiers' code of honour, that is to say, a common thief – the antithesis of an honourable manly warrior. Although looting had been banned under martial law, a degree of ambiguity remained, in that the SAW soldier was allowed to take whatever was reasonable in order to keep himself self-sufficient. Lack of clarity over what was deemed a necessity led to enormous variation in what could be taken within the law to what was perceived as no more than criminal looting; individual soldiers had to decide whether the act of looting constituted legitimate recourse to the spoils of war or could be deemed criminal behaviour. In reality, it depended on circumstances and was contingent on exactly who was carrying out the act.

Manly decorum and honour were central to Major W.S. Power¹⁸⁶ concerns, as he writes relates in this commentary; 'There was an order issued by Roberts about looting... any man caught would be shot... and his whole unit sent back to the Cape'. Power then relates a story of how one of his unit was caught stealing a chicken and tells how the soldier concerned would rather; 'shoot himself than be sent back in disgrace'. As if to emphasize how far the guilty soldier's behaviour contradicted the stereotypical comportment of a 'real' man, Power

¹⁸⁵ Similarly Theweleit's work (1987,1989) on the diaries and letters of the Freikorps, a post World War One paramilitary group in Germany, graphically details how women were violently abused if they failed to match their idealised images of how women should behave.

¹⁸⁶ 14th. April 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

continues; ‘If it had been any other man in my section I could have understood it, but this is a most respectable nice chap; his brothers are fishmongers in Derby’.

The contrast between attitudes to looting is at times stark. Some looting seemed at face value to be relatively benign, as Lieutenant E.I.D. Gordon¹⁸⁷ recalls the day when he; ‘Burned three farms in the forenoon. More prisoners sheep cattle... lot of forage [foodstuffs] looted’. At other times, looting took on a darker appearance, according to Corporal H.G. Lawrence’s¹⁸⁸ account:

Troops looted [a Dutch house] and smashed up a nice piano and took chairs and tables, Grenadiers responsible for that, I can say, for the piano was burnt at their cookhouse.

He puts some perspective on this looting by the Grenadiers by adding a caveat: ‘but it’s only the fortunes of war’. This highlights a discrepancy between what Lawrence says about the incident and his internalised emotional response (Turner and Stetts 2006:27). He appears to have a feeling of regret at the destruction of the property by affording it the description of ‘nice’, and believes it important that it should be seen as the work of another Unit. By making reference to ‘fortunes’ he is using a term that can mean both destiny and a windfall. At issue here is the fact that the private property of the Boer inhabitants was not just destroyed, but that their belongings were actually stolen. In a letter to his mother Private George Moody¹⁸⁹ writes; ‘We have looted all the stores of the townspeople’, while Corporal F. Hammond¹⁹⁰ goes into greater detail in his diary entry for Christmas Day 1900:

Sent out about 3 miles... to bring in about 8 women [and] girls [and] a lot of children. They loaded up the wagons and drove off, then we had a look through the house [and] some of the men got some good things, one got an accordion, one got a sovereign

¹⁸⁷ 8th. May 1900, diary entry, NAM 1999-09-84.

¹⁸⁸ 14th. May 1900, diary entry, NAM 2002-08-114.

¹⁸⁹ 20th. October 1900, letter, PRONI.

¹⁹⁰ 25th. December 1900, diary entry, PRO 0775.

[and] one a watch. B squadron was the last to get in [and] got very little. There was a lovely organ there [and] I played a few tunes on it[...].

Here is a picture of systematic looting that goes far further than foraging for supplies; it is the deliberate and systematic theft of property. The way in which Hammond writes that by being the last to arrive then B Company would be left with little indicates that this was a regular expected occurrence. The playing of the organ in the background gives a light hearted celebratory background to the whole scenario; there appears no acknowledgement that these acts could be dishonourable.

Proven acts of looting did allow the military authorities to impose severe sanctions, but this created no obstacle to some soldiers, who saw such acts as sources of pleasure and excitement. Captain Phillips¹⁹¹ continues with his theme of wanton destruction from soldiers in breach of honourable behaviour:

Soldiers...are men who have disregarded the civil standard of morality altogether, they simply ignore it...Looting again is one of his perpetual joys...looting for the sheer fun of the destruction; tearing down pictures to kick their boots through them; smashing furniture for the fun of smashing it, and maybe dressing up in womans clothes to finish with...To pick up a heavy stone and send it *wallop* right through the works of a piano is a great moment for Tommy.

Captain Phillips observations of 'Tommy' locates the practice of looting firmly in the realms of 'Tommy' having 'fun' but that in itself can be contextualised as dishonourable behaviour when notions of civilised behaviour are challenged. This does not, of course, represent all attitudes to looting. There were some boundaries that should not be crossed, Major Power¹⁹² is quite clear where these lie, in his diary entry he writes:

¹⁹¹ Captain L. March Phillips (1901) 'With Rimmington' Arnold, London.

¹⁹² 26th July 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

Jack Birch looted an old bible (from a farmhouse)...I told him he couldn't have done a wickeder action than to take her bible, much worse than burning down the farm!! I wouldn't have done such a thing.

His strong words and the emphasis using exclamation marks in his diary identify his strength of feeling on this point, even in the theatre of war there is a code of honour with regard to their common religion that should be respected, and that he would not cross. This subject is raised in the diary of Corporal Mealing¹⁹³ a year later; 'Chepener [a South African town]...possessed a splendid church. Which is not uncommon in South Africa no matter how small the town. There is always a fine church which we never destroy'. Mealing's matter of fact way in which he writes this firm belief gives the impression that throughout the war, even in the mayhem of looting and burning there was a singular expectation that manly soldiers would respect and maintain the honour of the Christian church. This has reverberations of a manliness borne of a muscular Christianity (Beynon 2002:41-43). But such championing of manly behaviour seems to be more the exception than the rule: the diaries and letters on the whole adhere little to the codified set of honourable behaviours.

In the majority of their writings, 'Tommy' and his officers appear to have embraced the act of following orders with gusto. What is missing from the diaries and letters is any regret or even simple commentary on the actions they were engaged in – actions which were at face value far removed from gallant and honourable soldiery. These engagements must have seemed stained and grubby affairs. Many of the soldiers accounts now remain devoid of the patriotic fervour or heroism as reported in Chapter Five, instead, some of the soldiers' writings bear a silence of where the descriptors of 'scorched earth' policy are more utilitarian, while for others their writings show a sickening reaction to the acts they have to carry out.

¹⁹³ 15th. September 1901, diary entry, PRO 0752.

7.7 'Duty calls and duty challenged - Acts of barbarism – suffer little children!'

This emotional 'front' (Goffman 1990) that soldiers portrayed and the inherent tensions it generated start to materialise in soldiers narratives. Major Power records in his diary¹⁹⁴ how he and his men; 'burnt five farms today by order of Cavendish[Commanding officer], beastly shame, the poor women and children the only sufferers, they burnt everything. I should like to put Cavendish on top and burn him'. The emotional response of Power here is a cocktail of shame, disassociation and anger/recrimination. Using the word 'beastly' relegates the behaviour of the soldiers as not only dishonourable but of a bestial dimension. Such is his shame that he distances himself from the actual act of burning itself by stating that it was 'they' that carried out the dishonourable behaviour not him. This emotional distancing between the act and the farm burning becomes more exaggerated when his statement about burning his commanding officer and in a sense Power reclaims the moral high ground by using the metaphor of fire as a emotional cleansing agent in an attempt to exorcise his own involvement. This is not just a prerogative of the officer class as also giving emotional vent is Private Lewis in a diary entry¹⁹⁵ which also refers to farm burning when he expresses a similar reservation about his command when he writes; 'Column is getting quite mutinous. The Colonel in charge... is an old fool'. There is a growing disenchantment with the destruction of farms and the removal of Boer civilians. Private George Moody writes in a letter¹⁹⁶ of such activities in his diary; 'clearing the country of all stocks [and]... people... its sad to see the fires at every farm burning'. Moody's sadness is not an isolated emotional reaction and the feelings and emotions that find the scorched earth policy of farm burning and removal of Boer peoples repugnant establish a momentum. The following extracts from a

¹⁹⁴ 20th September 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

¹⁹⁵ 5th January 1901, diary entry, NAM 1999-12-125.

¹⁹⁶ 16th March 1901, letter, PRONI D1454/1/1.

letter and two diary entries suggest; Trooper Rooke writes in a letter home;¹⁹⁷ ‘...it is hoped it will soon be over for I am sick and tired of it.’ and Private Leathart writes¹⁹⁸; ‘... I wish this war would finish up. I am heartily sick of it...’ and later continues the theme¹⁹⁹; ‘... I am getting sicker and sicker of this business... all the farms are being burnt round here and the women sent to a refugee camp. It is awfully rough on them.’ Both Rooke and Leathart are relating to the burning of Boer farms and the forced removal of Boer civilians to concentration camps by translating their emotional disgust into the more physical manifestation of feeling sick. Although this visceral manifestation of emotional distress and revulsion becomes more prevalent in soldiers’ narratives as the war progresses it was visible at the start of the war as well as Lieutenant Harry Pryce-Jones²⁰⁰ records:

...I’m afraid we have another big fight in front of us, we are all pretty sick of it, as it is killing work, the sun absolutely boiling all day and at night it is very cold[...].

However it was a more prevalent narrative reflection in how the later war was being prosecuted, that is the implementation of scorched earth policy but also at times soldiers displayed erratic emotional responses. There is discernable ambiguity in the way some soldiers dealt with their duty emotionally. The next two extracts from Captain Dallimore’s diary suggest that it was possible to adjust emotionally – and speedily – to the unmanly role of the fighting man reduced to harassing the civilian population he initially writes²⁰¹:

We came back...to a large farm owned by a Mr Conradie whose wife we had to arrest, it was a hard case the poor woman cried when she heard she had to leave her little children in fact it is work [...] I don’t want any more and I have asked the Colonel to send someone else next time...The husband was in a terrible way when he heard his wife was to be arrested and the poor little children cried and hung on to mother. We

¹⁹⁷ 5th. May 1900, letter, C.L.I.P.

¹⁹⁸ 8th. September 1900, diary entry, NAM 190-09-57.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid diary entry 22nd. November 1900.

²⁰⁰ 1st. December 1899, letter, NAM 1989-01-125.

²⁰¹ 19th. January 1901, diary entry, PRO 1379.

had a wagon to bring in all the prisoners with but I let her husband drive her in a Cape Cart. She had a little baby four months old and of course I had to come too...I am sorry for them.

However, some two weeks later²⁰² he writes:

[I] went to another farm... and when I knocked the door they refused to open it for us... I decided to take possession and broke down the door, the women screamed and made a great fuss, but we are used to it now and did not take much notice.

The marked change in so short a space of time is arguably indicative of a rapid wearing down of the soldiers' emotional reserves of compassion. In the encounter described initially the screaming of the women was granted sympathy and Dallimore registers his disgust at dishonourable action. However by the time the second encounter occurs only a few weeks later his emotional response has hardened and women screaming as they are forcibly removed register little emotional sympathy and Dallimore's emotions are now dampened, relegated to an unemotional detachment borne of routine. But for some there was no cap on compassion, no emotional redundancy, their disenchantment with war work that seemed to them to be nothing more than brutal barbarity was becoming more and more strident.

Although many soldiers found the 'acts of barbarism' (Farwell 1999:353) against Boer civilians in general abhorrent, actions that involved older people, women and children proved particularly hard to cope with emotionally. Major Power displays initially contradictory thoughts about arresting a Boer. His diary entry in spring 1900²⁰³ begins; 'Went out this afternoon to arrest a Boer, thought there might be some fun'. But as the arrest develops, he grows increasingly contrite and finds he is not having fun at all; 'I was very sorry I went; I had to bring in an old man, about ten women weeping and gnashing their teeth,

²⁰² Ibid., diary entry, 7th February 1901.

²⁰³ 15th May 1900, diary entry, NAM 1983-03-12.

Fig xiv. Concentration Camp



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very sad show don't like that sort of job.' There is nothing unequivocal about a later diary entry²⁰⁴, in which his emotional of state is obvious:

We burnt down one farm, where there was a woman and six children: they said her husband was the man who killed the Kaffir. It was a very sad business, the children all crying, and begging for mercy, and the woman down on her knees praying and crying. I would have nothing to do with it [...].

The emotional state of the soldiers had a direct bearing on how their actions were classified as honourable or dishonourable. Here Power directly associates the emotional sadness he is experiencing by disassociating himself from the dishonourable act he witnesses. His emotional state acts as a barrier, a defence mechanism (Scheff 2006) that allows him to distance him from the dishonourable behaviour whilst simultaneously permitting him to reclaim and re-establish and reinvigorate his manly honourable manly self.

The carnage the SAW inflicted on children in particular preyed on soldiers' minds. Private W. Abbott writes in his diary²⁰⁵:

...During the march slight opposition were met with, a sad incident occurred. A party of Boers took up behind a farmhouse. Our people opened fire with pom pom. A family that was in the farm got injured, a little boy killed & a little girl & her mother seriously wounded.

A second entry²⁰⁶ for the following day takes the incident further; it is filled with pathos yet simple in expression; 'The little girl wounded yesterday died today & was buried tonight beside the river at 5pm. The coffin was made of biscuit boxes'. Private Abbott initially reveals his emotional state at the sad plight of the Boer family and by relating the death of the little girl and her subsequent burial in a coffin crafted from biscuit boxes he renders both of the children's deaths centre stage inviting an emotional response from the reader of the

²⁰⁴ Ibid., diary entry, 10th September 1900.

²⁰⁵ 1st June 1901, diary entry, NAM 1982-08-335.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., diary entry, 2nd June 1910.

narrative. His own emotional response a seeming silence also resonates with what Rock describes as a 'suppression of emotion and vulnerability' (1973:128). For Turner and Stetts (2006:44, 45) men often present a façade which is at odds as to how they actually feel emotionally. In this example the quote from Abbott carries with it an emotional intensity that is powerful in the simplicity of its descriptive matter of fact language used starkly contrasted with the emotive imagery of an innocent child buried in biscuit boxes. Perhaps his final reference to the burial beside the river obliquely refers to the potential washing away of the dishonourable shame that lies buried in South African soil. The steady erosion of manly warriorhood was now gathering momentum. The manly ideal of imperial soldiery as a body of magnificent warriors imbued with courage, strength, fortitude and strict codes of behaviour now gives way to a realistic portrayal of men stripped of any vestige of military or masculine decency. From here on, the SAW soldier finds himself in emotional positions that sit uneasily with him not only as a man but as a manly soldier. There is a self-conscious jostling to lay claim to whatever remnants of civilised behaviour he can find to make him look at his own actions, not so much in terms of his immediate audience of soldier mates but in a more profound sense of a man alone gazing at his own conscience.

The emotional turmoil that arises from self reflection often materialises in soldiers' writings as an expression of how they feel and also how they want their readers to be aware of the disgust and shame they feel when they witness dishonourable actions and take part in them. This stands witness to another transition, as the individual soldier moves from corrupted warrior manliness to a manliness that 'paid more attention to the promptings of the inner self' (Tosh 2002: 460). This was a reframing of manliness itself, and if warrior manliness was to follow it, then inhumanity had to be performatively named, not once, but many times. By doing so, the moral ascendancy of manliness could be reclaimed and reintegrated into the warrior code (Welch 2000:289).

There were numerous incidents in the SAW that would leave the imperial soldier exposed to the raw emotionality and vulnerability of military actions that sliced through notions of honourable behaviour by comrades in arms. The following example of a young British soldier vividly and poignantly captures the excruciatingly intense emotional demands that can be played out in war. The SAW provided the backdrop for scenes of emotional confusion that were intensified even more when where the violation of childhood innocence was the central act. In the latter part of 1900, an eighteen-year-old trooper called Edward Edinburgh, a bookmaker by trade and now a volunteer soldier in a war far removed from his wife and family, who remained behind in his home town of Middlesbrough in the North East of England. Trooper Edinburgh's mind was very much on family matters: his wife was due to have a baby, and there is every probability that this gave a heightened sense of emotion to the detail in a letter he wrote to his family²⁰⁷. His emotional feelings of vulnerability are clear:

My dear wife and children... I am in an awful state of mind to know you have got through and whether it's a son or a daughter.

He continues – and the emotional content here is positive:

...[the British authorities] have sent all the women and children to join their husbands, it is indeed a pretty sight to see the little children God bless them dressed in their best along with their mothers all happy with the prospect of seeing their fathers and the women their husbands.

It is at this point that the letter takes a much darker turn. Clear signs of inner emotional turmoil come to the surface, because he knows that:

the Boers can scarcely get enough food for themselves [...] [T]hey [the British authorities] think this will ultimately make them surrender... think how the poor children will suffer.

²⁰⁷ 1st November 1901, letter, NAM 2002-02-1354.

In the final and most poignant part of his letter home, the full shame (Scheff 2006) of what had happened and what it meant to him and his soldier mates is made apparent:

And believe me the Artillery opened fire on them... what must have been the feelings of the poor women and children... and I give you the straight tip not one man of us cared about the job it seemed so cruel to be hunting those poor women and children who but a few hours before seemed so happy, not knowing that shortly after we were to be sent murderously after them.

From the use of book maker language and ‘giving the straight tip’ to the hunting motif through to the sense of anxiety experienced by his soldier mates Trooper Edinburgh tells his wife the detail of the unfolding events as someone who has sinned might use the confessional. The honourable behaviour by British soldiery is being reduced to an emotionally redundant state devoid of all human compassion where a biscuit box coffin and the slaughter of innocent women and children come to symbolize a now defunct sense of honourable behaviour in war. Soldiers’ honourable behaviour and the symbolism of the warrior hero as the apotheosis of masculinity is now seriously challenged.

7.8 Summary / Conclusion:

This chapter has as its central focus the emotional dynamic of the SAW soldiers’ everyday lived experience. How he faced the emotional challenges made of him throughout the war and how these challenges were being responded to are pivotal to the chapter. From attempts to adhere to the manly stoic imagery of fighting soldiers to the fracturing of the powerful image of an idealised hegemonic honourable fighter the SAW soldier was as much in a battle with his own emotions as he was with the Boers.

The solid foundation of stoic, tough, manly behaviour fashioned over many years of exposure to, and valorisation of, the ‘stiff upper lip’ was increasingly reduced to feet of clay. This adherence to the strong silent warrior image had consequences for the SAW soldier and

he sometimes paid a high price in his emotional well being. 'Tommy' and his officers invested considerable emotional energy in order to maintain the at times façade of stoicism. This investment could also be manipulated through impression management where a tough manly exterior was the emotional front of an actor whose inner turmoil, if revealed, would expose his vulnerability and render him weak and consequently in breach of the hegemonic ideal. I argue that the soldiers' narratives do indeed reveal an emotional turmoil that is often contradictory where the 'front of house' actor as presented to others is profoundly at odds with how the soldier actually feels emotionally. The need to present a self that is perceived as a manly soldier, whose masculinity is robust and tough, creates inner emotional tensions that soldiers at times struggle to disguise or adequately deal with.

The equally manly imperative of fighting with honour also takes centre stage and here the SAW was faced with trying to maintain an image founded on an expectation that presumed soldiers would behave in an honourable fashion. Dishonourable behaviour was the marker of men whose masculinity was corrupted and fractured and was the complete antithesis to how the SAW soldier had been encouraged to behave. Honourable behaviour in war had a script that was to be followed in a seemingly quasi religious way where manly honourable behaviour was not only vaunted as desirable but became 'de rigueur' (Hallisgrimsdottir and Adams 2004:277). Soldiers' narratives here demonstrate how they initially aspire to the ideals of honourable behaviour but this becomes emotionally more difficult as they engage with more and more of the war. Events unfold that will shake the very foundation of belief in honourable behaviour in war and shame becomes the prevalent and deeply felt response that soldiers express. The ensuing internal emotional turmoil expressed in the soldiers' narratives strongly suggests that for some of them the ideas and ideal of honourable behaviour in war becomes a sham, a superficial manifestation of a corrupted code of behaviour now shredded in the reality of the SAW.

In both of the elements examined in this chapter the emotional context of the SAW soldiers' is the focus of the narratives. Within this context two major overriding themes emerge. One suggests that both stoic and honourable behaviour as idealised and desirable types of behaviour for soldiers was a strong driver for soldiers in the SAW and this driver was the result of many years of the inculcation of manly values. The other major theme is that despite the strength of such drivers the SAW soldier was by dint of circumstance made vulnerable and exposed to an emotional turmoil that brought with it not only personal pain but challenged the very core of his self belief and also his belief in the moral justification of the SAW.

Fig xv. Peace at Last



Chapter Eight

Manly reflections of the South African War

March 29 [1900] For God's sake don't go showing this diary to anyone, and tell them not to show it to any one else. I just write whats in my head at the time I write, and it won't do for general perusal at all - *Major W S Power*.

March 2 [1900] ...I personally thought it a most oportune time to discharge my overflowing heart by writing to my loved ones at home & acting on impulse I commenced and wrote four letters – *George Maidment*

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter sets out to review the research beginning with a short summary of the empirical chapters, in which I identify the main areas of enquiry. Within this context comment is made on the interplay between the more significant findings and the nineteenth century socio cultural practices. In the next section I go on to revisit the theoretical framing of masculinity and reflect on its relevance to the soldiers of the Victorian era, highlighting the gaps in academic inquiry that this thesis endeavours to address. The chapter moves on to link the research findings into the wider discourse on war and masculinity, taking a wider cross century gaze, finally focusing on the masculinity and SAW nexus. The chapter will end by discussing what contribution this research has made to the knowledge and understanding of masculinity and war, finally closing with proposals for future research and a brief biographical reference to some of the soldiers featured in the work.

8.2 Debrief – discussion of the empirical chapters

Although located in the past, this is a piece of research firmly rooted in sociological analysis, using original historical sources, the narratives of SAW soldiers. I have some envy of Pakenham (1981) who in the 1960's was able to interview actual veterans of the SAW and

record their story on tape. However the passage of time meant that was no longer possible but I was able to access rich data in the form of letters and diaries written by serving soldiers in the SAW. This offers the researcher an immediate challenge, letters from soldiers can only ever give insight into half the dialogue that took place, the recipient, although 'invisible' is still an important part of that discourse. Although the diaries are not written strictly as a dialogue, they are often written for a specific audience (Stanley 2005). There are challenges in working with narratives, Rock (1973) has suggested that it is impossible fully to submerge oneself in, or wholly live other people's life experiences, but that such limitations should not deter investigation. It is with those limitations in mind that I undertook this sociological study; the following are a brief summary of the empirical chapters.

The first empirical chapter addresses the manly imagery, patriotism and bravery of the SAW soldiers. It was apparent from narratives it was important that the image of self he presented as a fighting warrior mirrored his performance of manly deeds on the battlefield. The image of the male body portrayed or imagined by SAW soldiers fulfilled notions of handsomeness and fitness, a presentation of the physical self that defines a warrior hero. This chimes with ongoing research in which Woodward and her colleagues analyse the significance of soldier images, asking how the 'heroic soldier' comes to be represented in contemporary print media through photography (Woodward et al. 2009)²⁰⁸.

From time of enlistment or the issuing of orders to go to South Africa, to disembarkation and arrival at the battle front the soldiers' feelings of manliness were perceptible in their rush to do their patriotic duty. It was also apparent that the 'patriotic rush' was tempered at times with a reticence to leave home and in some cases left soldiers conflicted with the knowledge of the reality to come. On the battlefield itself, soldiers were

²⁰⁸ Brevity dictates that I do not discuss further Woodward et al's findings but in essence newspaper images of soldiers both anonymous and named were analysed concluding that such media representations are also a conduit for wider social anxieties relating to armed violence. See also Woodward, R. (2007) Negotiating identity and representation in the mediated Armed Forces.: Full Research Report ESRC End of Award Report, RES-00023-0992.

faced with a multitude of dangerous situations, very often for the first time in their lives. Given that war is 'an educator in manliness' (Mosse 1996:115) and a key site for masculinity (Higate 2003), the SAW soldier was placed in an arena where his manliness was to be tested in the extreme.

The diaries and letters illustrate the varied responses from the SAW soldier to this situation both in action and in thought. For some soldiers, the combat situations of the SAW granted them opportunity to perform bravely in front of their soldier mates and it is my contention that a major driving force for most if not all of this battlefield behaviour was the fear of not only letting their soldier mates down but the ensuing shame in doing so. I argue that fear of being perceived as unmanly was a painful emotion that many soldiers had to endure under exceptionally demanding conditions. Other soldiers enthusiastically embraced the furore and blood lust of battle and acquitted themselves as manly soldiers are expected to do (Butler 1990). My research suggests that there was not complete conformity to these manly soldiering ideals and that there was a great variety of responses by soldiers fighting in the SAW. The behaviour of officers and enlisted men betrayed a distinct anxiousness with regard to the manly warrior code they were expected to follow. I suggest that masculinity and war as represented by manliness in the SAW presents a more complex phenomenon than one of soldiers simply following predetermined codes of manly behaviour. This chapter considered the underlying ideological forces that compelled the soldiers to play out their manliness in the SAW. In essence the hegemonic manly script was often compromised by both 'Tommy' and his officers weakening its potency. Alongside this was a strengthening of the relationships between soldiers and this became paramount as a backdrop to the SAW. Sharing war with mates and all that entails for some became more of an imperative than being a soldier.

Chapter Six relates to how as the war progresses many soldiers faced fighting conditions they had not expected to experience in the war against the Boers. This was a different type of campaign to those that had gone before and included a war of attrition in which the hardship and starvation of the sieges at Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking left soldiers exasperated by boredom and incessant artillery fire. After the siege situations were relieved the war turned to a more open style of fighting where Boer commandos typically fought a guerrilla style engagement with the British. The soldiers became very reliant on the company of 'soldier mates', strong bonds of camaraderie were formed as they shared the experience of the SAW together. The narratives begin to show that manly warrior performance was driven by social attachment to comrades superseding the initial drivers of patriotism and imperial loyalty.

During this latter phase of the war the normally acquiescent 'Tommy' began to increasingly question decisions made by his officers. As far as 'Tommy' was concerned, his own plight was simply being ignored by officers who were more interested in their own lives. As the war continued, the ordinary soldier started to turn his attention to his mates when he thought they too were now acting improperly. In this situation, where 'Tommy' was criticising other soldiers of his own rank, the reputations of the officers were beginning to regain lost ground. The relationships between officers and other officers also became very fluid and hierarchical deference became less of a given as officers – especially the more junior – started questioning the judgements of their seniors.

For some soldiers in the SAW there was more than just a desire to have the image of a manly warrior there was also a real lust to engage in face to face fighting with the Boers, an urge that was combined with an almost carnal expression of excitement. Manly warrior credentials could be re-established with the thrust of a bayonet or a volley of bullets. Both officers and 'Tommys' at times engaged in a carnival of killing and slaughter which at times

appeared to be the complete antithesis of the idealised many warrior with all his virtuous attributes of fair play in the game of war. This chapter reflects on the social context in which these actions took place and examines the impact on how the soldiers acted and reacted to situations around them.

The final element of the empirical work, Chapter Seven, was concerned with soldiers honour/dishonour and his stoicism under extreme pressure. British soldiers faced what was for some an extremely uncomfortable time in latter stages of the SAW. The drives which attempted to capture the Boers through forcing them into one particular area, placing women and children into concentration camps and the mass destruction of Boer property and livestock had at times a deeply emotional impact on British soldiers. For some soldiers, routine engagement in such actions was rationalised as a justifiable consequence of war, but for others things were never so clearly cut. The routine destruction of property and the incarceration of the Boer civilians in squalid concentration camps led to great disillusionment for many and bitter distaste of their actions for others. Constant looting and destruction started to drain away what was deemed suitable gentlemanly behaviour. Attitudes to women were dependent at times on how pretty the women were or how much they met the expectations of the 'good woman' (O'Neill 2003). Theweleit (1987, 1989) for example describes how the Freikorps violated women who failed to meet an idealised picture of womanhood with complete emotional detachment (Scheff 2006). The sometimes inhuman treatment of black Africans by some British soldiers reflected just as much the cruelty of individual soldiers as it did the distorted moral compass of imperial masculinity of the time (Beynon 2002).

To survive war soldiers also needed to be stoic, and since stoicism was an important characteristic of manliness for the Victorians, it certainly made an appearance in the SAW soldiers' writings. Wounded soldiers quietly bearing their pain and discomfort were presented

as an idealised form of stoicism. The ‘stiff upper lip’ that came to signify both Victorian and Edwardian manliness (Roper 2009:20) began to wobble, and although ‘Tommy’ could calm his fear of artillery fire by giving the Boer siege guns ‘fun’ names, he was also at times very despondent.

In their writings, soldiers were increasingly voicing dissatisfaction with the continued fighting. The last of the ‘gentleman’s wars’ (Pakenham 2004) was starting to challenge the established image of the much vaunted manly warrior (Braudy 2003, Dawson 2005, Roper 2009). There are two pressing emotional stressors that result from having to perform feats of manliness continually and to engage in combat. The first one is the dread that one may succumb to the fear of dying in a situation where running away would be a more logical option. However, the shame accompanying this would be overwhelming, and therefore that it had to be rejected. The second stressor is the emotional turmoil and shame of participating in acts of war that contradict the individual’s own moral code. The manly warrior was now not so prominent in soldiers’ writings; in his place a tarnished image appeared – an image that ultimately challenged the established hegemonic order. Scorched earth was the arena of war in which the idealised manly behaviour of the Victorian soldier in combat was seriously examined and tested by an increasingly war-weary British soldier. Locating Victorian manliness within the emotional context of the situations the soldiers faced is the focus of this final empirical chapter.

‘Reflections on the theoretical ‘tool kit’

I was able to fully employ the ‘tool kit’ I constructed for the empirical analysis throughout the three data chapters. Employing an analytical framework constructed around the intersection of hegemony/performativity/emotions enabled me to engage with the analysis of masculinity and the SAW soldier. It allowed the ideological context of masculinity to be considered, revealing the complex overlay of hegemony, performativity and emotion

manifested in manly image, patriotism and bravery. The examination of the social context of soldiers' masculinity using the 'tool kit' also provided the opportunity to obtain a much fuller and detailed picture of how the hegemonic structure of masculinity was being challenged by individual soldiers exercising greater agency over how they performed as men. This analytical process was also central to gaining critical insight into the attachment soldiers held to their mates subordinating their commitment to the war and deference to hegemonic authority. Despite the fracturing of hierarchical hegemonic relationships the methodological apparatus captured how some soldiers continued to perform their warrior duty with an effervescence of blood lust for killing. Finally the 'tool kit' helped articulate how soldiers responded to emotional hardship by performing hegemonic masculinity for fear of being unmanned. It also helped lay bare the emotional anxieties of soldiers who were troubled with the duties they had to carry out.

8.3 Masculinity and Victorian manliness: Theoretical positioning of masculinity and war

The current academic debate surrounding masculinities is very much embedded in discussions about structure and agency and over the ways in which men's social practices came to be labelled as masculine (Butler 1990, Connell 2002, Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003, Kimmel et al 2005). 'Doing gender' – as Judith Butler refers to it – means much more than the adoption of a particular lifestyle: it is implicitly bound up with artificially created social assumptions that are applied to both the male and female sex. Biological determinants are used to create a whole range of associated behaviours that become accepted through repetitious use, such as masculine and feminine.²⁰⁹ The former was imbued with hegemonic socio-political power and the latter came to be subordinated to it. Socio-cultural influences are fluid over time and create indices of masculinity, like the forms of manliness that come to

²⁰⁹ This could equally apply to homosexual, transsexual, or transgendered.

be situated in a particular period of time – in this instance the *fin de siècle* of the nineteenth century. This partially explains why masculinity is perceived as such an ‘illusory’ concept, insofar as it is non-static, fluid and nebulous (Dalley-Trim 2007:200).

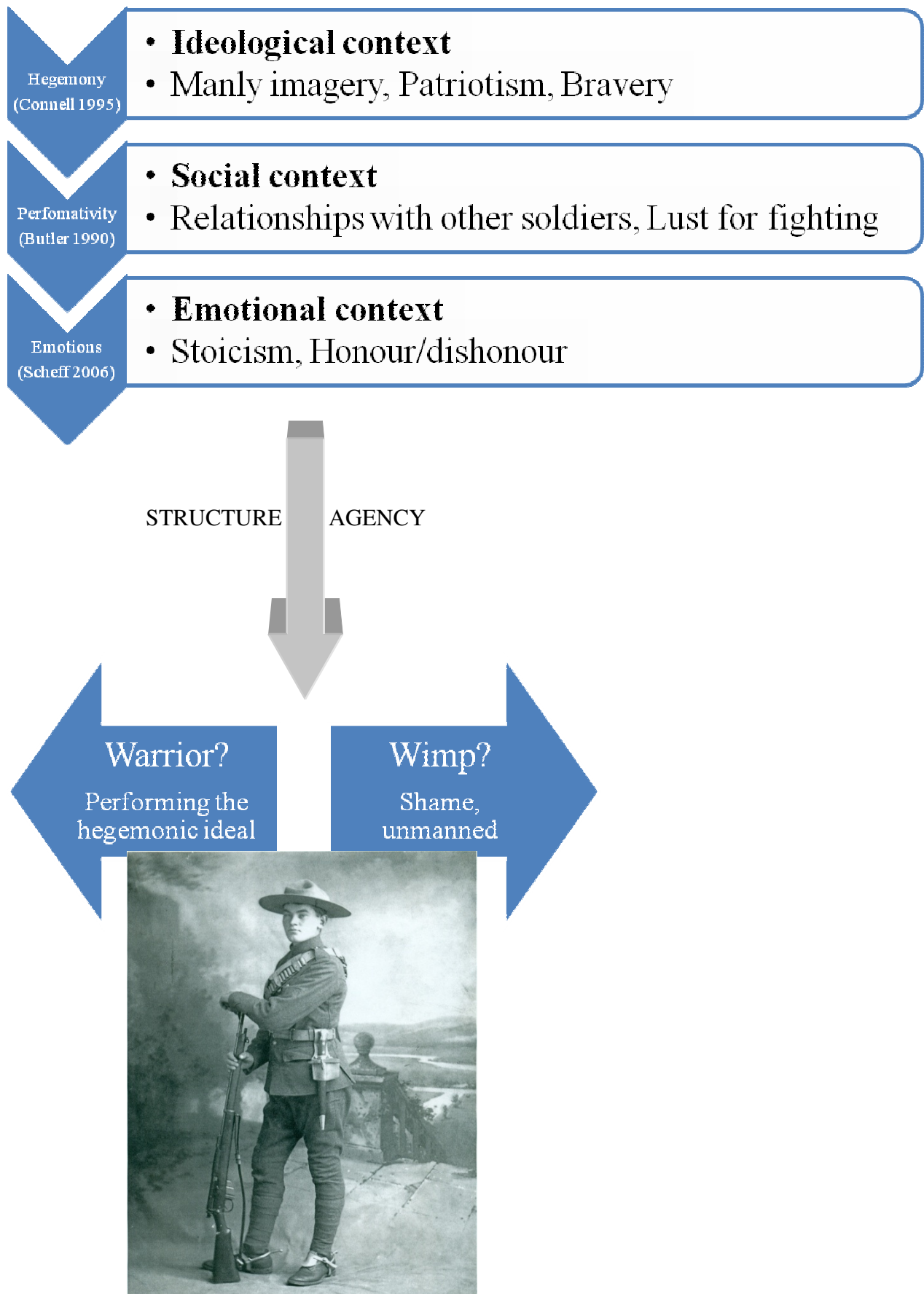
This research started from an original aspiration to analyse a body of narratives, within which it would be possible to examine the sociological relationship between masculinity and the soldiers of the South African War. As far as the present writer is aware, such documents have never been subjected to this type of scrutiny. SAW diaries and letters have appeared in academic literature, but most of this writing has its focus in historiographical analysis. This research endeavoured to address this gap by using the letters and diaries to connect with the expressions of manliness of both the officers and ‘Tommy’ in the SAW. In embracing the ‘narrative turn’ working with the soldiers’ ‘documents of life’ with all the challenges that brings, as highlighted in chapter three, the research was able to gain an intimate insight into soldiers’ performance of their masculinity. The research fully recognises how important the historical dimension is to understanding masculinity (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003:11). Given that it is a piece of sociological analysis set in late Victorian and early Edwardian times, this historical dimension is obviously of great importance. What this has done is to give intimate insight into the masculinity of those soldiers who fought in the SAW. By executing the research as described in this thesis, I contend I have been able to give clearer insight into the masculinity of those soldiers who fought in the SAW.

The contention that masculinity is in ‘continual flux’ (Beynon 2002:6) creates the need for an intellectual intervention that recognises what I would describe as the general ‘looseness’ of the term. To deal with the idea of ‘looseness’, this research reflected on earlier literature, and from this created an innovative ‘tool kit’ for the analysis of the soldiers’ writings that would recognise the socio-historical antecedents of their lives as boys and men

growing up in the Victorian era. The choice of methodology and methods employed (detailed in Chapter 3) located within the theory of hegemony, performativity and the sociology of emotions was developed with the aim of eliciting the richest possible data from the diaries and letters. It is with the acknowledgement of these limitations that I endeavoured to develop a methodology that would help draw from the soldiers' narratives their own standpoint on Victorian manliness.

What I am suggesting is that, for these Victorian soldiers masculinity was framed by a hegemonic manliness that was subjected to their individual interpretations as social actors. I feel the concept of hegemonic masculinity to be persuasive in that it supports the idea that there is no single military masculinity but rather a range of shifting versions, all contingent on factors like historical era, culture, place, and economic influence (Horne 2004). For some, the act of manliness was embraced fulsomely, for others it was a front behind which their true feelings and emotions were blunted by the fear of shame and disgrace should they be unmanned. I suggest that fear and shame are major factors in the playing out of masculinity and that this requires greater recognition in the literature and associated research. The relationship between officers and enlisted men has always been a feature of the British Army (Clayton 2007) and this research suggests that the relationship between 'Tommy' and his officers varied between deference to rank by 'Tommy' to his total castigation of those who were supposed to give leadership and take charge. This was often linked to the expectation that officers would not only be manly but wear the mantle of their super ordinate manliness with distinction. When they failed to do this then they were doubly damned; damned by failing to perform manliness in war and doubly damned for failing to live up to the expectation that officers should be the manly warrior that 'Tommy' should aspire to be.

Fig. xvi Warrior / Wimp Dichotomy



This is I would contend, is a parallel to how women can be labelled as Madonna/whore when they perform their gender badly by not subscribing to the socio-culturally prescribed rules of femininity (O'Neill 2003). Here I suggest that the masculine equivalent of the Madonna/whore dichotomy is reproduced in the SAW by a 'Warrior/ wimp' dichotomy (see Fig.(xvi) page 257) equally powerful in its negative labelling of soldiers masculinity. The application of this 'Warrior/wimp' tag was not just preserved for officers 'Tommy' could just as easily apply the label to other 'Tommys' and with as much venom. At times the SAW officers perceived 'Tommy' a gallant chap imbued with a patriotic spirit that was brave and loyal. While on other occasions he was lazy, feckless and in need of good leadership from manly officers who could also apply the 'warrior/wimp' label to any 'Tommy' falling short of the hegemonic expectations of performing as a manly warrior.

The following two diary extracts help to illustrate this dichotomy, both performances draw emotion from the writers, both are judged in terms of the 'warrior / wimp' label.

Trooper Gilbert letter home 28 February 1902:

Every trench had its little black heap of dead and wounded and the groaning was heart rending to hear...Our Regimental Colonel Porter was cut up just as if they had been his own sons...Col [Colonel] White...his eyes moist...said 'look at them how they lie. Every man down in his own trench. See what a stand they have made...Soldiers and men every one of them.

For those that fell 'as men' the Colonel offers the greatest accolade, they can be treated more like sons than subordinates, his 'moist eyes' emotionally registering their manly warrior credentials. Major J.E.Pine-Coffin in a diary entry Monday 29th October 1900 wrote:

Boers dispersed after losing a few men. Our patrols followed them for some distance. It was a company of Berks volunteers that surrendered, the Capt [Captain] now under arrest. A very disgraceful affair.

Major Pine–Coffin’s account contrasts starkly with that of Trooper Gilbert, he reports that apparent cowardice with anger and disapproval. It is a ‘very disgraceful’ act that not only has resulted in the arrest of the officer in charge but relegates all of their behaviour to the category of ‘wimp’.

I would contend and argue that the recognition of this ‘warrior / wimp’ dichotomy adds significantly to the understanding and interpretation of the SAW soldiers narratives and should enhance future study in the area of war and masculinity.

8.4 The soldier’s tale: a wider cross century gaze

What have I found out in relation to masculinity from analysis of letters and diaries written by soldiers in the South African War (1899-1902)? My first conclusion is that defining masculinity within the context of the SAW is more complex than I had at first imagined. The SAW letters and diaries illustrate that there were competing attitudes and ideas about what made a man. Despite having a pre-determined hegemonic life script of manliness (Connell 1995) to call upon, soldiers’ behaviour and emotional responses to the war were determined individually; I therefore argue that we can only ‘map’ masculinities. By this I mean that we can at best illustrate the competing ideas and assumptions at work within this nexus of war and masculinity by critically examining the soldiers’ letters and diaries then superimposing on them an analytical framework. In doing so, we can begin to unravel how masculinity was actually enacted by the soldiers and juxtaposed against imaginings of masculinity (Dawson 2005). Central to this is the way in which masculinity is defined by men and exemplified in their writings, how it is acted out in a performative sense (Butler 1990, 1993), and how men respond emotionally, especially through feelings of manliness at one end of the spectrum and shame at the other (Scheff 2006).

Non compliance to the manly warrior ideal could have very real consequences for the SAW soldier. If he failed to perform his soldiering in a manly fashion that suited the imperial

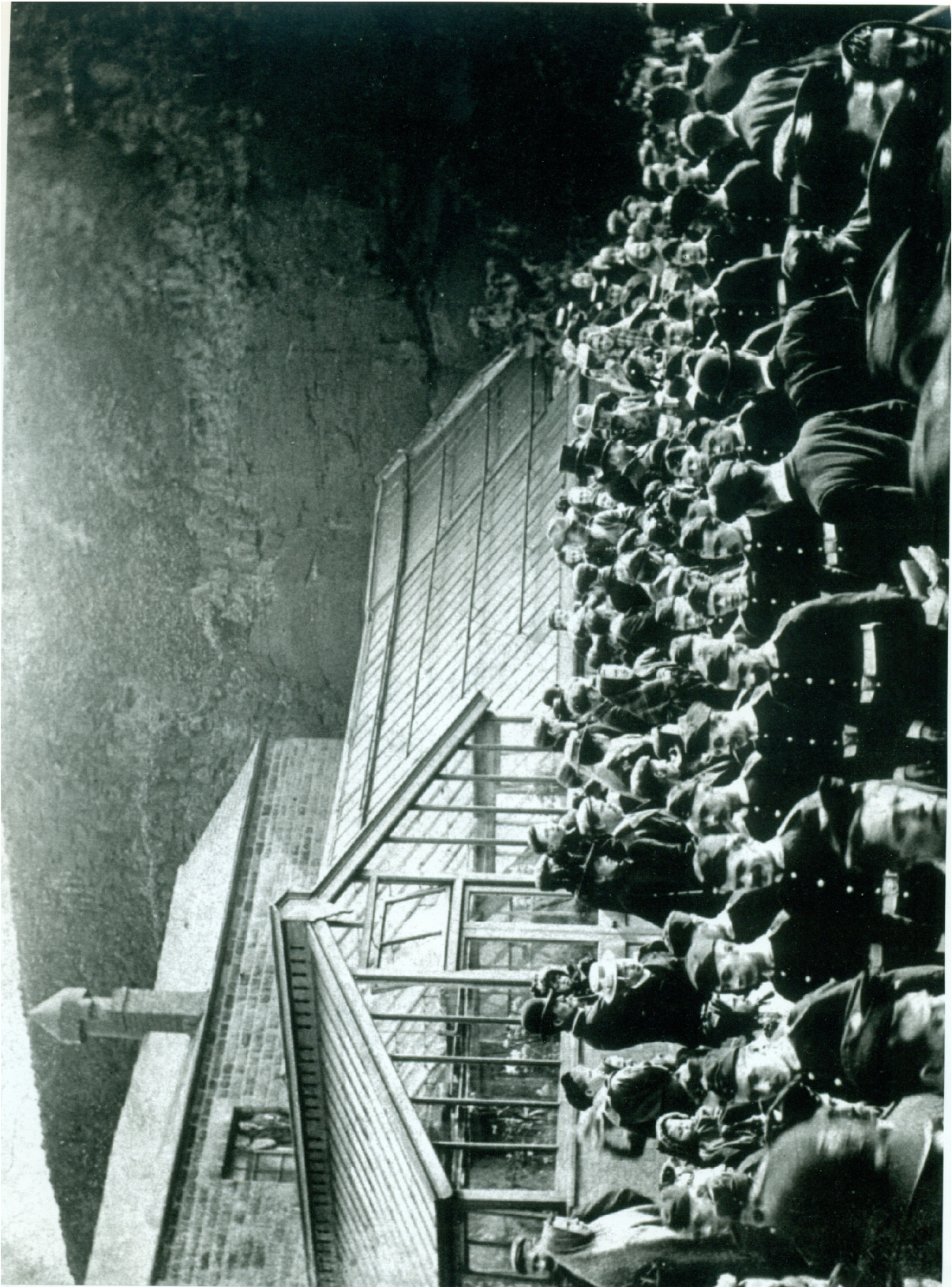
manly creed, he was seriously at risk of suffering ridicule by being labelled unmanly synonymous with 'wimp' category and, as such, something shameful. The fear of being 'named and shamed' (Harris et al 2004) outweighed the many risks the SAW soldier might have to confront in combat. This choice between action and shame is mirrored in my policing experience; in Belfast when faced with having to take decisive action that may have involved shooting someone the prevailing guidance from others was to shoot first and ask questions later or more eloquently positioned as, 'Better tried by twelve than carried by six'.

The imagery of both the SAW soldier and the British soldier of the present day also has a shared resonance. The militarized body, whether as a self presentation or captured as a media image, is a shared corporeal experience of soldiers present and past.²¹⁰ The role of the press for both the SAW fighter (Hampton 2001, Morgan 2002) and the contemporary British soldier (Woodward et al 2009) is much the same in both cases, with both a populist and conservative supportive press displaying various degrees of support and concern. The newspaper headlines of 1899-1902 bestowing the SAW soldier with images of manliness, patriotism, bravery, honour and stoicism have a familiar ring in the current press in relation to the war being engaged in Afghanistan. From the Driffield Times Yorkshire June 15th 1901:

Captain J. Mortimer and 80 men of the Active Service Volunteer Company of the East Yorkshire Regiment arrived at Southampton from South Africa, on Tuesday morning, on the Assaye. The special train conveying the Volunteers did not reach Beverley till half past nine. For more than two hours the streets leading to the railway station were densely crowded, thousands having assembled to take part in the welcome...the Mayor of Beverley (Councillor Elwell), who bade them a hearty welcome...and assured them that their brave deeds and gallant conduct were as well known in Beverley as they were in South Africa...'

²¹⁰ Some of the earliest and arguably best photographs of British soldiers were taken during the Crimean war (1853-1856) see Sweetman (2001).

Fig xvii. Homecoming Parade



This following extract is from the Sun newspaper published on the 14th Oct 2008 and gives some flavour to modern soldiers' imagery in the popular press:

'Crowds cheer our brave boys

THREE hundred brave soldiers were given a heroes' welcome today as people lined a market town's streets to salute them. More than a thousand turned up to cheer the 1st Battalion of the The Royal Irish Regiment who were marking their return from the Afghan badlands. The brave squaddies, based at Tern Hill, Shropshire, paraded through the streets of Market Drayton with bugles, pipes and drums playing. The battalion was led by their regimental mascot, an Irish Wolfhound called Brian Boru VIII wearing desert combat uniform.

To add some contradiction to the hegemonic manly imagery of soldiers a year previous the same newspaper reported under the banner head line of, 'Captain: I want a Para boobs' the Sun newspaper on the 2nd April 2007 tells the story of Captain Ian Hamilton and his quest to undergo a sex change. Captain Hamilton I would suggest has much in common with the experience of his SAW counterpart in how soldiers seem compelled to be manly in order to reinforce their masculinity and the emotional turmoil that can ensue. The bold emphasis and use of capitals is from the original:

HERO officer has sent shockwaves through the Parachute Regiment by becoming a WOMAN. Captain Ian Hamilton has transformed himself from a muscular, battle-hardened veteran to a brunette called Jan...And he is set to become the first Para in Forces' history to undergo a sex swap...Ian, 42 who has served with the super-tough regiment in Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia will spend £20,000 over the next five years on the change...Yet he is adamant he is **NOT** gay and does **NOT** find men sexually attractive describing himself instead as a "male lesbian"...He told how he had been tormented for years and driven to feel suicidal by the conflict between his feminine inner feelings and the need to put on a macho front...All the time he was trying to appear manly and aggressive while secretly dressing up in female clothing...Finally he decided to re-enlist in the Army to "sort out" his mixed feelings and joined the toughest unit he could think of, the Parachute Regiment...He

said: “At 35 I was really past it but I felt I had to prove my masculinity to everyone.”... “As a man, I could never express emotion because I was scared people could see inside. For a woman, love is an emotional journey.”...But still managing a joke about the hormones he is taking, he added: “I can’t parallel-park any more. Honestly, I can’t even map-read.”

This thesis takes as its core research vehicle masculinity in the SAW critically interrogating the narratives of the soldiers involved in that conflict. The SAW soldier’s battle with his masculinity and manliness pivoted around the prevailing hegemonic script of the manly warrior and the emotional turmoil that could result in the non performance of that prescribed script. In the above newspaper article some one hundred and five years later the same narratives appear to be alive and well; the need to be manly for the sake of appearance and the emotional turbulence that results in the pressure to conform to the manly script. The newspaper itself also carries and reinforces the narrative of hegemonic masculinity by its use of bold print and capital letters emphasising the words, **HERO, WOMAN, NOT** gay, yet in somewhat of a more subtle contradiction does not actually condemn the soldier concerned. This I argue is a corollary of the ‘warrior/wimp’ dichotomy I determined in my analysis of masculinity and the SAW.

The subjects of this thesis are located at the *fin de siècle* of the nineteenth century and the diaries and letters of the SAW but as I will suggest later in this chapter there may well be research yet to be carried out that more fully explores the connectedness of war and masculinity over different times, cultures and conflicts. At this juncture I candidly suggest that the findings of the thesis substantially contribute to our better understanding of masculinity and the SAW.

8.5 So near yet so far: Limitations of the study - Contemporising masculinity and the SAW

By the time I started to write this, the SAW was over one hundred and three years in the past. Two world wars and many thousands of other conflicts have taken place since it ended and many still engulf the world today. If, as Higate and Hopton (2005:444) suggest, the nexus between war, militarism, and masculinity is an enduring one, then it would be legitimate to ask of this work how far it may be relevant to today's British soldiers. Can the experiences of 'Tommy' and his officers all those years ago be mirrored today? Despite the passage of time there appear to be many parallels with the SAW experience and that of the modern British soldier. Now as then, many soldiers commit their memories of fighting to diaries; they also write letters home to loved ones in their tens of thousands. Published memoirs from both eras detailing soldiers' lives²¹¹ exist, but a limiting element of this present research is that its focus is entirely the SAW and I will suggest how that might be remedied in the next sub section.

'Stiff upper lip. - Really?'

In his study of the manly Edwardian 'stiff upper lip', Heathorn (2004:4) concludes that, although there has been a substantial amount of good-quality literature about the things boys and young men were exposed to in the Victorian/Edwardian era, we don't actually know if any of that was received or acted on. This is a moot point: much of the literature is predicated on the supposition that at least some of the socio-cultural influences of the time were absorbed. The real questions are these: how much has been absorbed? And has it been actively or passively absorbed? For the purposes of this research, I took the position that socio-cultural influences not only have an influence, but that their influence is likely to be at its height on boys becoming men, when their sense of masculinity is developing (Haywood

²¹¹ Woodward and Jenkins of Newcastle University for example are involved in a major E.S.R.C. funded project (2009-2011) investigating the social production of published memoirs of soldiers, <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/military-research/themes/memoirs.html> refers.

and Mac an Ghail 2003). Allied to this is the idea that the ways in which men display their masculinity as a result of socio-cultural influences are tied into their life course. Spector-Mersel (2006: 72) argues succinctly that men's hegemonic masculinity is variable over time and that, as men age, their masculinity changes. She further argues that the life scripts men are given to follow, using 'exemplary life stories' are usually appropriate to their age and social position. This might go some way to explain how the socio-cultural influences that men were bombarded with as boys came to gain purchase at that early period of their lives. One example of this appeared in Victorian times with the well publicised popular story of the boy who becomes a soldier hero²¹² in the SAW. However this suggests an over deterministic 'cause and effect' mechanism for masculinity and this work determines that it is much more complex and fluid.

'Opening new fronts?'

This research has revealed the SAW diaries and letters of soldiers in a manner that served to critically analyse the masculinity of those soldiers. It opened up new fronts of academic investigation in relation to war and masculinity and the neglected SAW in particular; but additional research still beckons and I see this possibly developing on three new fronts. First of all by considering using other wars throughout the ages for comparative purposes, utilising the methodology and methods employed here the masculinity and war nexus could be tested and examined across many historical eras and cultures. Secondly to expand the knowledge base on working class masculinity and the SAW. Eileen Yeo (2004: 129) comments that 'with some honourable exceptions, historians who have tackled masculinity have tended to analyse the middle class'. This is not to say that the paucity of research into working-class men in the SAW should be laid at the feet of historians; but it is a clarion call for much more work to be done, ideally work of the calibre of the research carried

²¹² General Hector McDonald was the darling of such a translation from ordinary boy to war hero. (Fig vii)It was he who allegedly was the role model for Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Model of a Major General'. His fame was short lived: he took his own life in a Paris hotel after allegations of sexual impropriety (Riches et al. 2009).

out by Price (1972) on the working class of that period. If the masculinity as manliness narrative theme is to be more fully examined within the context of the SAW, then this deficit must be addressed. I would suggest that further research into nineteenth-century working class masculinity has become an intellectual imperative. In this context, I agree with Heathorn (2004: 4) when he states that ‘most importantly we need more scholarship on the bulk of the male population in the working class’.

That said throughout the thesis I was increasingly drawn to photographs of the SAW and how they could be integrated into the narrative of the thesis and the stories I had traced in the diaries and letters. I have used some images of the SAW mainly for illustrative purposes but I feel there is an increased strength in research that uses a visual narrative. Given the extensive volume of photographs associated with the SAW there is new opportunity here to analyse them within the context of the SAW and masculinity. The collaborative work of Woodward et al (2009) in relation to photography and the military is well worth examining.²¹³

This thesis can but start the intellectual interrogation of a wealth of diary and letter material pertaining to the SAW that exists in archives in many parts of the world. The research does not present itself as a perfect model, but I do believe it can act as a signpost for future investigation. However it does also present a substantive and extensive analysis of diaries and letters from the SAW and contributes significantly to that body of knowledge.

‘Conclusion: The Last Post’

The soldiers’ diaries and letters that were forged in the fiery furnace of South Africa over one hundred and ten years ago are littered with references to manly behaviour. Their stories are soldiers’ stories, and they bear remarkable similarity to those told by their modern-day counterparts who soldier in their own fiery furnace of war and destruction. The writings

²¹³ See <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/military-research/> for research details.

of countless ‘Tommys’ and their officers in South Africa all those years ago bear witness to the fact that the human condition is a malleable and fluid construction of the self that can vacillate, stay static, or morph into a new self. The social construction and performance of masculinity and how hegemonic masculinity can be resisted is an important feature of this work. For manly men fighting in wars with other manly men, it can prove to be a parlous journey both physically and emotionally and the ‘warrior/wimp’ dichotomy helps demonstrate how shame can play a major part in influencing the performance of their masculinity. The diaries and letters of the British soldiers fighting in the South African War have opened up new opportunities for us to use our sociological gaze and imagination to understand such men better (see Appendix 7 for some brief biographical detail). This thesis offers a significant contribution to that understanding. To see their world through their eyes and to interpret their social world is a powerful intellectual challenge and a privilege.

Appendix 1

Chronology

1899

- October 11** The war begins with the Boer invasion of the Cape and Natal
- October 13** Boers besiege Baden- Powell at Mafeking
- October 15** Boers besiege Kimberley
- October 20** Battle of Talana
- October 21** Battle of Elandslaagt
- October 24** Action at Reitfontein
- October 30** ‘Mournful Monday’; White besieged at Ladysmith
- October 31** Sir Redvers Buller, the new British Commander-in-Chief arrives at Cape Town
- November 23** Battle of Belmont
- November 25** Action at Graspan
- November 28** Battle of Modder River
- December 10** Battle of Stormberg; first British defeat during ‘Black Week’
- December 11** Battle of Magersfontein; second British defeat of ‘Black Week’
- December 15** Battle of Colenso; third British defeat of ‘Black Week’
- December 18** Lord Roberts replaces Buller as Commander-in-Chief of British forces in South Africa, with Kitchener as Chief of Staff

1900

- January 6** Action at Platrand, outside Ladysmith
- January 10** Roberts arrives at Cape Town
- January 23/24** Battle of Spion Kop
- February 5/7** Battle of Vaalkrans
- February 11** Roberts opens his campaign
- February 14** Fight for Tugela Heights
- February 15** Relief of Kimberley; Boers victorious at Waterval Drift
- February 18** Battle of Paardeberg
- February 27** Cronje surrenders at Paardeberg; British finally victorious at Tugela Heights
- February 28** Relief of Ladysmith
- March** British begin erecting blockhouses

- March 7** Action at Poplar Grove
- March 10** Battle of Driefontein
- March 13** British occupy Bloemfontein unopposed
- March 15** Roberts offers amnesty to Boers prepared to surrender their weapons, the so-called 'hands-uppers'
- March 17** Boers adopt policy of guerrilla tactics in tandem with continued conventional resistance
- March 31** Action at Sannah's Post
- April 3 /4** Action at Mostertshoek
- April 5** Action at Boshof
- May 12** Boer attempt to enter Mafeking fails
- May 17** Relief of Mafeking
- May 24** Orange Free State annexed to British Dominions as Orange River Colony
- May 29** Actions at Doornkop and at Biddulphsperg
- May 30** Roberts enters Johannesburg
- June 5** Roberts occupies Pretoria
- June 7** De Wet strikes British supply lines at Roodewal
- June 12** Action at Diamond Hill
- June 16** Roberts issues proclamation on burning farms
- July 31** Boers under Prinsloo capitulate to the British in Brandwater Basin
- August 27** Action at Bergendal
- October** General (Khaki) election in Britain; 'pro-Boers' receive scant support
- October 19** Kruger leaves South Africa for Europe; Schalk Burger appointed acting President
- October 25** British annex the Transvaal
- November 6/7** Action at Leliefontein
- November 29** Kitchener replaces Roberts as Commander-in-Chief, who leaves for England on 10 December
- December 13** Action at Nooitgedacht
- December 16** Kritzinger and Hertzog invade Cape Colony
- December 27** arrival of Emily Hobhouse to visit concentration camps
- 1901**
- January 28** the Transvaal, French begins massive drive to round up Boers
- January 31** Action at Modderfontein

February 10 De Wet invades the Cape
February 28 Abortive peace talks at Middelburg
May 16 Kritzinger launches second invasion of the Cape
May 28 Action at Vlakfontein
July Committee under Millicent Fawcett appointed to inspect concentration camps
September 17 Actions at Elands Poort and Blood River Poort
September 30 Action at Moedwil
December 11 Kritzinger begins third invasion of the Cape
December 25 Action at Tweefontein

1902

February 28 Extensive British drive culminates with success at Lang Reit
March 7 Action at Tweebosch
April 11 Battle of Roodewal
May 6 Action at Holkrantz
May 15/17, 29/31 Peace conference convened at Vereeniging
May 31 Treaty of Vereeniging signed; Boer forces surrender
June / July Boer prisoners of war released

Appendix 2 – original working taxonomy

	<i>Taxonomy of Masculinity</i>		
1	General / other/unclassified/feminine/discipline/antiwar		
2	Alcohol / drink / drunk / drugs		
3	Bravery / bravado		
4	Class / hegemonic / ruling class / working class / other		
5	Christian / moral		
6	Duty / manly / masculine / stoicism / tough		
7	Emotional / sexual repression		
8	Fair play / playing the game / sportsman		
9	Patriotism / Just cause		
10	Gentleman-as officer / scholar / Gentlemanly / Chivalrous		
11	Good leadership		
12	Honour / dishonour		
13	He man / hard man / aggressive		
14	Homosexual / homophobia		
15	Homosocial / camaraderie		
16	Imperial / racial superiority / racism		
17	Heroic		
18	Misogynistic / relationship to women		
19	Officer and other ranks		
20	Physical / manly image		
21	Sport as in fighting battles as sport		
22	Violence / thrill / excitement of battle / taking life		
23	Family relationships / marriage		
24	Non combatants		
25	Superior fighter / virility		
26			

Appendix 3 - Coded Letter

POSTAL ADDRESS:
AUSGRAVE ROAD P.O.

TELEGRAPH ADDRESS:
"OCEANA"

Ocean View Hotel.....

.....Berea, Durban.

15. August. 1900.

Dear Mother.

I write you this line to let you know how well I am, in spite of having been invalided across the Transvaal Border, and to congratulate you on another grandchild; not to enter into details about our capture by the Enemy. You will hear of that from Edwin, to whom I am also writing by this mail, and on my return, probably tell you all the news of it.

It was whilst we were stationed at the water-works near Bloemfontein that I heard the news of Father's death, quite by accident in a letter from Mrs. Willie Barbours thanking me for some stamps I sent her from Capetown. No cable or other letters reached me - except one from Charlie a day or two later (21st May) when we were hurrying through from Bloemfontein to Kroonstadt. I wrote you of course immediately but was unable to get the letter sent down & it was in my Officer's note book when we lost everything on surrendering to De Wet on the 31st May, since when I have not had the heart to write a line, nor have I heard a single word of any sort from home till the present.

Appendix 4



A is the Army

That dies for the Queen
It's the very best Army
That ever was seen

D is the Daring

We show on the Field
Which makes every enemy
Vanish or Yield

G is the Game

We preserve with such care
To shoot, as it gracefully
Flies through the air

J's for our Judges

Who sit in a row
And send folks to prison
When naughty you know!

M is for Magnates

So great and so good
They sit on gold chairs
And eat turtle for food

P is our Parliament

Commons and Peers
They will talk if permitted
For months-nay for years

S is for Scotland

The home of the Scot!
It's wetter than England
And isn't so hot

B stands for Battles

By which England's name
Has for ever been covered
With glory and fame

E is our Empire

Where sun never sets
The larger we make it
The bigger it gets

H is for Hunting

For this you've a box
A thoro bred hunter,
Some hounds and a fox

K is for Kings

Once warlike and haughty
Great Britain subdued them
Because they'd been naughty

N is the Navy

We keep at Spithead
It's a sight that makes foreigners
Wish they were dead

Q is our Queen!

It fills us with pride
To see the Queen's coach
When the Queen is inside

T is the Tub

That an Englishman takes
As a matter of course
Just as soon as he wakes

C is for Colonies

Rightly we boast
That of all the great nations
Great Britain has the most

F is the Flag

Which wherever you see
You know that beneath it
You're happy and free

I is for India

Our land in the East
Where everyone goes
To shoot tigers and feast

L is the Lion

Who fights for the crown
His smile when he's worried
Is changed to a frown

O is the Ocean

Where none but a fool
Would ever dare question
Our title to rule

R is the Roast beef

That has made England great
You see it here pictured
Each piece on a plate

U is our Unicorn

Such a nice beast
His home is here now
Though he comes from the east

V's Volunteers

Who can shoot very straight;
They are drilled now and then
Between seven and eight

X as a rule means

The London Police
Who are paid by the country
For keeping the peace

Y is for Youngsters

Gilded and Gay,
The newspapers call them
The jeunesse doree

W is the Word

Of an Englishman true;
When given it means
What he says, he will do

Z is the Zeal

Which is everywhere seen
When a family practices
God save the queen



Appendix 5 -Letter to a Bereaved Mother

This is a copy of the original has you will see it is badly worn.

29. 9. 1901.
Field Force.
S. Africa.

MANCHESTER
1125
29/9/01

From Colonel Crosbie.
Commanding
5th Manchester Regiment.

Dear Madam,
Your letter of the 20th August reached me safely. Your poor Son died a heroic Soldier's death and all belonging to the 5th Manchester Regiment, from myself downwards, are proud of having been Comrades of so brave and honourable a lad. I am glad to be able to inform you he did not suffer any great pain. He died saying he hoped if he got over his wounds he would soon be able to return to his duty. I am informed by those who were present with him in the blockhouse at the time that he passed away happily and willing to meet his God. You have every reason to be proud of his Memory and may God help and comfort you in your great sorrow. I will enquire if he has left and keepsake that could be either sent to, or kept for you. I have asked my wife to call and see you the next time she is in Manchester.

Believe me,
Yrs faithfully,
H. Crosbie. Colonel
Commanding 5th Manchester
Field Force.
S. Africa.

1125/17/32

Appendix 6 – Sources

NAM – National Army Museum

PRONI – Public Records Office Northern Ireland

TWAS – Tyne & Wear Archive Service

DCRO – Durham County Records Office

CLIP - Canadian Letters and Images Project

Australian War Memorial – PRO – DRL Australian Public Records Office

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Normand PH, Captain – 1st Imperial Light Horse **NAM 1998-02-207**

Phipps Harry, Private– 1st Border Regiment **NAM 1983-02-15**

Pine Coffin, Major – **One Man's Boer War, edited Susan Pine Coffin**

Power William S, Lieutenant – Imperial Yeomanry **NAM 1983-03-12**

Putland Walter, Private – Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment) **NAM 1981-07-18**

Rawlinson, Lt Colonel – **NAM 1952-01-33**

Reitz Deneys - **Boer Commando**

Rooke , Trooper – **CLIP**

Rumbold Alfred, Sergeant – **NAM – 1977-11-8**

Saville CA, Private – **NAM 1993-09-82**

Smith JF, Sapper – **NAM 2001-10-9**

Stewart,DM, Trooper - **CLIP**

Walker JC, Trooper – Strathcona Horse - **CLIP**

Willoughby ,J Private – **Acc:2939(D) Box 1/42**

Diaries and letter collections accessed for research

Barham, B Private – Letter – NAM 1992-11-16

Capps, WT Private – NAM 1993-01-135

Cherry, David Corporal – NAM 2004-03-83

Cluer W, Trooper – **NAM 2001-11-174**

Cooper,CH Private – PRO 1703
Craig, James Lieutenant – Letter Collection – PRONI – D1415-D8-
Cripps, John C Private – PRO 0971
Day, TB Trooper – CLIP
De Salis EAA Colonel – NAM 1990-07-120
Dennis, George Lieutenant – NAM 2004-03-63
Duncan, GC, Sergeant Major – NAM 1998-06-103
Exon, John Private – PRO1642
Featonbury, L Trooper – NAM 1998-10-281
Fox, CA Corporal – NAM 2001-02-311
Gartside, Robert, Lieutenant - 3DRL/ 7274
Gaygan RW, Private – **NAM – 1990-08-226**
Hallahan, Private – PRO 1534
Harnett, Harold, Trooper – DRL/2507
Hight, WW Trooper – NAM 1992-07-99
Hill JE, Private – NAM 2000-07-7
Kekewich RG, Lt Colonel – NAM 1990-07-117
Knight TB Private – NAM 1995-11-313
Lindsey, J Gunner – NAM 1999-03-142
McLennan HV Civil Engineer Kimberley – NAM 1995-06-42
McPherson, D Trooper – CLIP
Moody, George Private – Letter collection – PRONI D.1454/1/1-95 & D.1454/2/1
Mundy, TJ Private – NAM 2001-07-508
Neville, J Trooper – NAM 1992-07-76
Noble Jones ,J, Trooper – Letter collection – CLIP
Perks,E, Lance Corporal – ACC: 2958 (D)
Robinson, Trooper – **CLIP**
Rooke, Trooper – Letter collection – CLIP
Storey, RW Sergeant – D/DLI 7/681/1
Turner, Charles Wentworth – PRO 1357
Walker, JC Trooper – CLIP

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Appendix 7

Soldiers are we – some biographical detail

This thesis has called upon the narratives of many soldiers who fought in the SAW and this sub-section will give some of their biographical details. These men are more than words on a page. They lived in a time of great social change and fought in a country far from home. Over twenty-two thousand of them would die, most of them from disease (Pakenham 2004). Such as they are, the biographies come mainly from the published memoirs used for this research. Some are very incomplete, but I would still prefer to give some detail rather than none at all, to flesh them out a little rather than leave them insubstantial wraiths. Narratives from archives did occasionally have some biographical detail attached; they are included where possible. I also include these mini biographies of a sample of the soldiers I used for this research in order to recognise and ‘emotionalise’ (Silverman 2009:3) their lived reality.

Captain Jack Gilmour (Archive National Army Museum) – Imperial Yeomanry. Survived both the SAW and World War one and went on into politics to serve as British Home Secretary under Ramsay Mac Donald and Stanley Baldwin. He died in office in 1940.

Lieutenant Malcolm Riall Prince of Wales’s Own Regiment of Yorkshire (published letters) – Served in South Africa. He put together a comprehensive photographic collection which forms a large part of the published collection of his letters. He was seriously wounded in World War One and continued to be part of a large family with close connections to the military. According to his biographer, he died at the end of a long and interesting life.

Private John William Milne 1st Service Company Volunteers, Gordon Highlanders. Survived the SAW and fought in World War One. He died in 1951.

Major W.S. Power The biographical detail states that in early life Major Power emigrated from England to the United States of America, where he became a cowboy in Texas. He joined the British army at the outbreak of the SAW and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. He survived the SAW and married much later in life, but both he and his wife were killed in a motor car accident.

Trooper David Morrison Stewart Served with Strathcona's Horse when he was nineteen years old. He also served in World War One and died in 1929.

Private William Fessey (King's Own Scottish Borderers) (Published memoirs). Survived the SAW, was badly gassed at Loos in World War One, and died of related medical problems in 1947.

Lieutenant James Craig (Archive records P.R.O.N.I.) survived the SAW and the First World War, by which time he had entered Irish politics. He became the first Prime Minister of the newly created Northern Ireland and was knighted.

George Charles Maidment (Regular Army Medical Corp) (Published diary). Served in the SAW and survived the siege at Ladysmith. He died in 1947.

Trooper Henry George (Harry) Gilbert from New Zealand, serving in the 7th Canterbury Mounted Rifles (Published letters). He volunteered to fight in the SAW at the age of nineteen. He also served in World War One, this time as Captain Harry Gilbert, military chaplain. He died in 1954.

Bombardier Walter Mitton 39th Royal Field Artillery (Regular) (Published diary). Served in the SAW and was a career soldier. He was killed in action in Flanders during world War One.

Major John Edward Pine-Coffin Maltese Infantry (Regular) Came from a long line of soldiers and was decorated with D.S.O (Distinguished Service Order) during the SAW. He

was seriously wounded in Egypt in 1906 in an attack when a colleague was killed. He served in World War One in a home command. He was married in County Londonderry Northern Ireland but the family seat was in Devon.

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